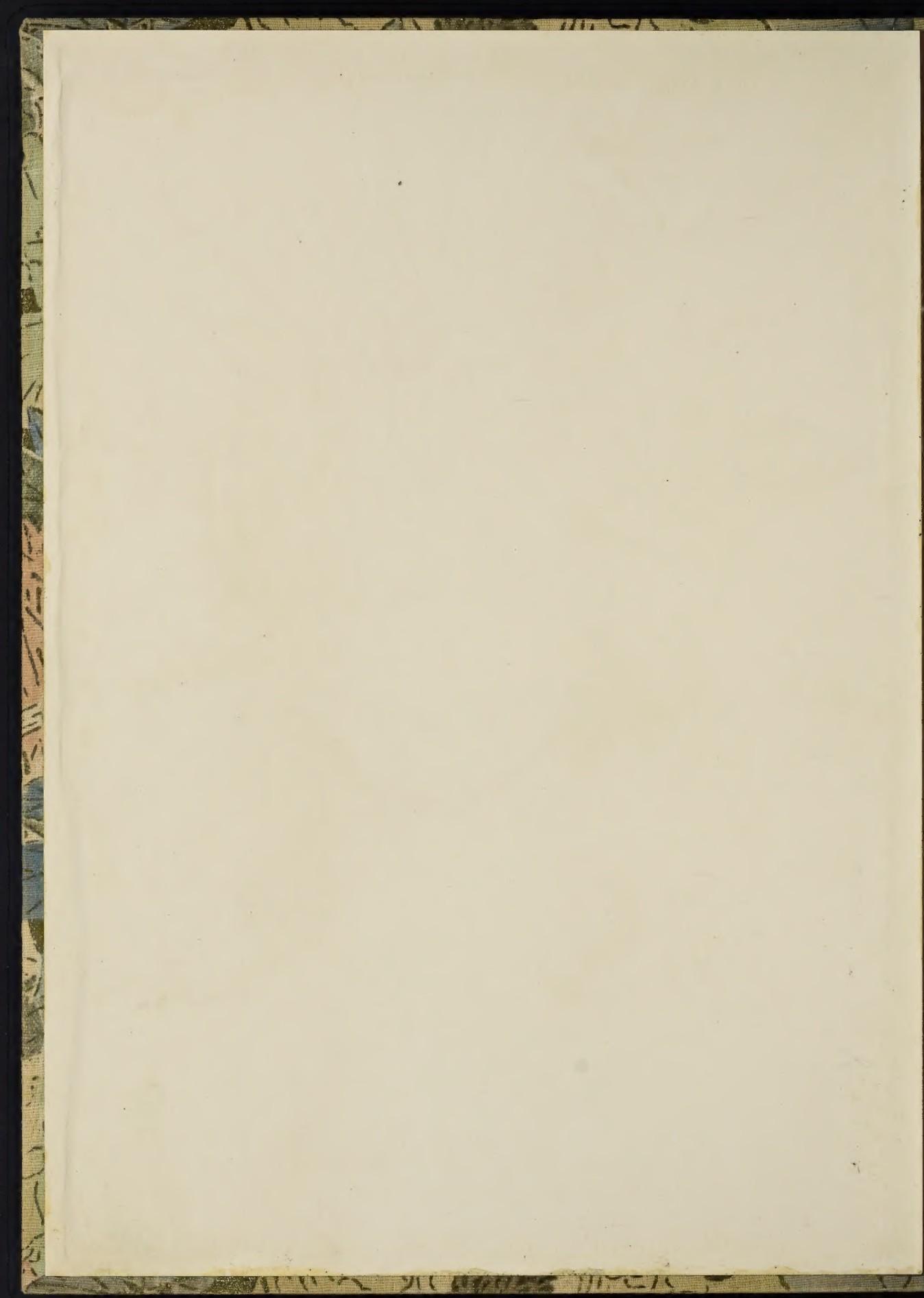
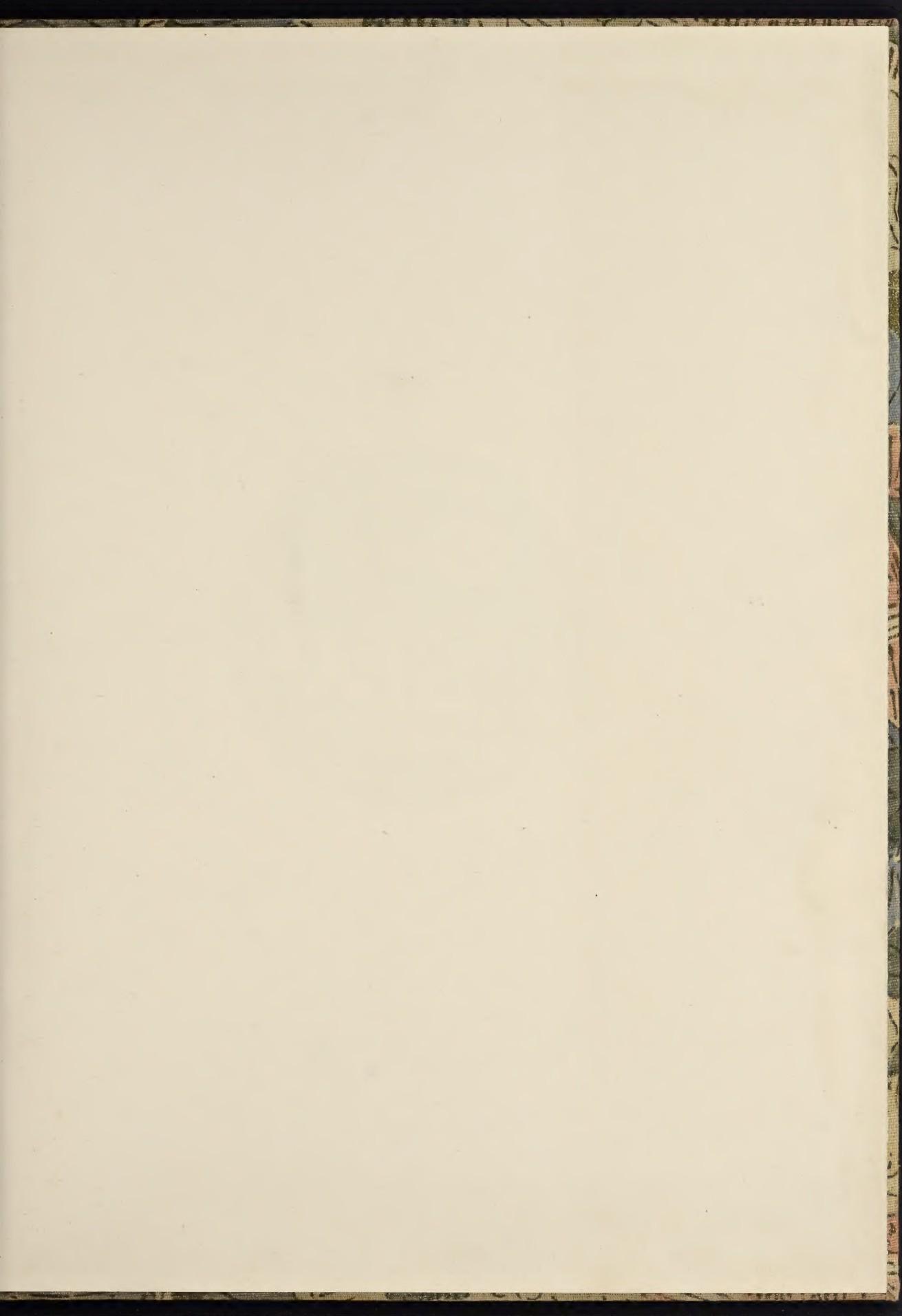
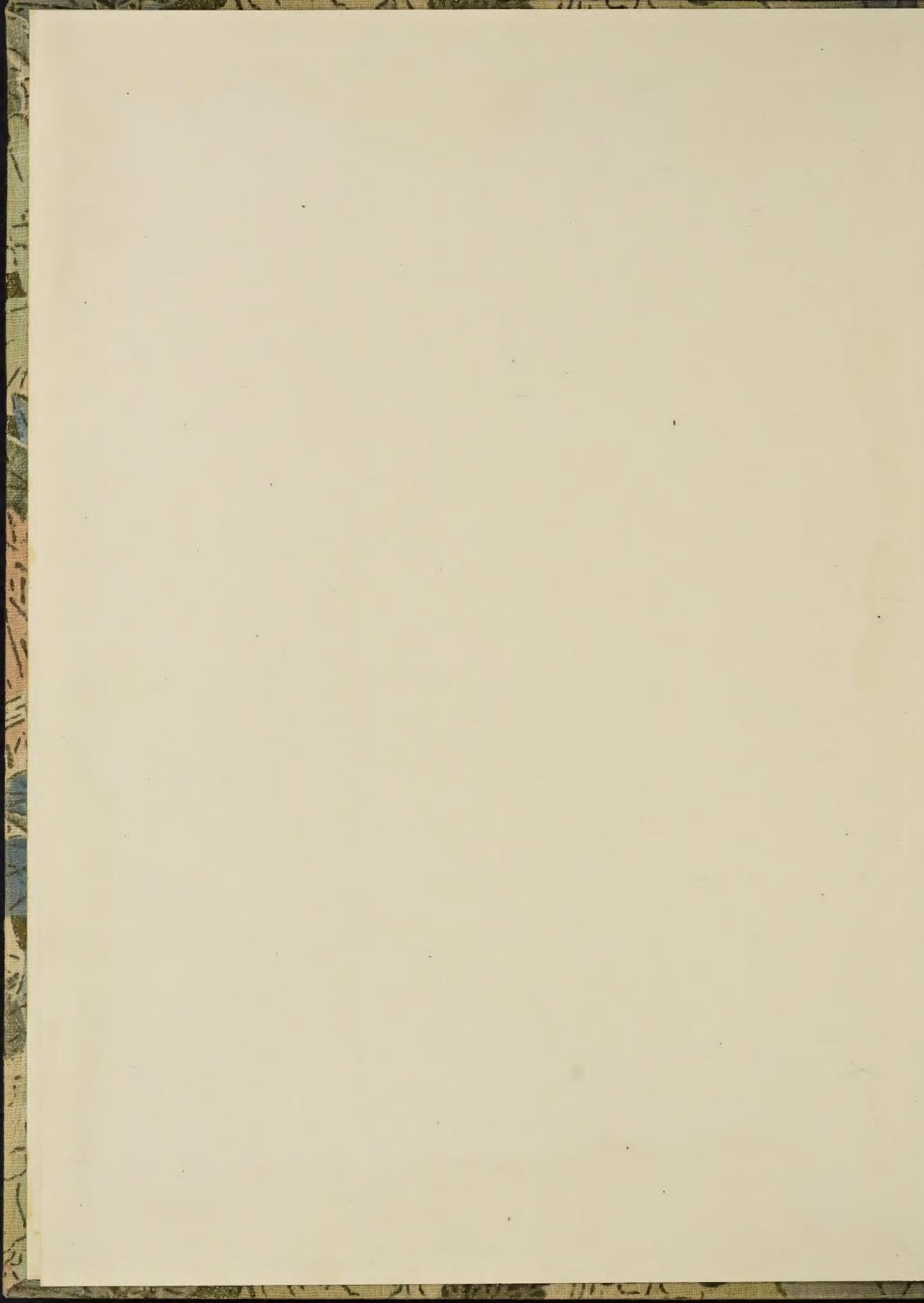


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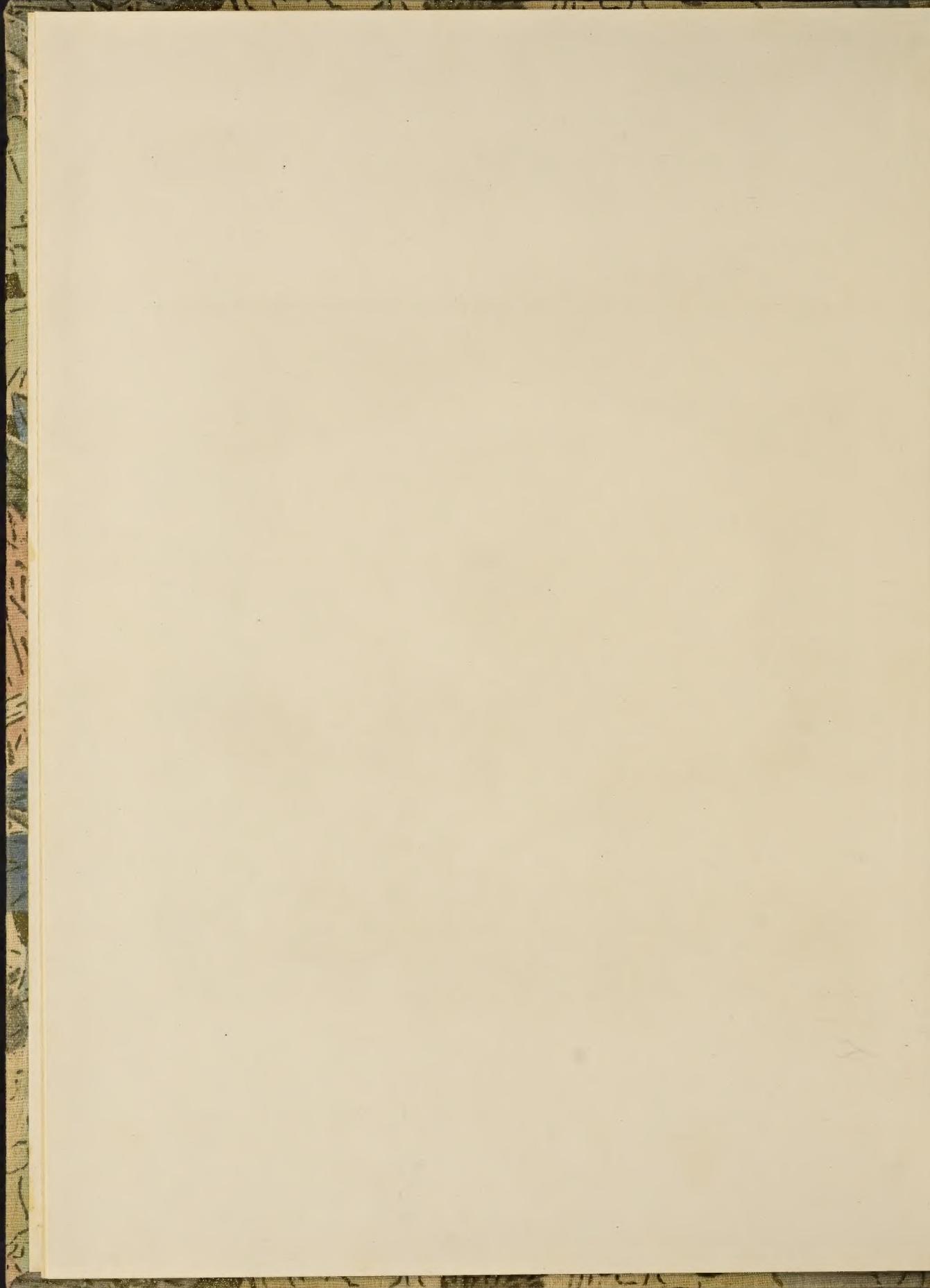
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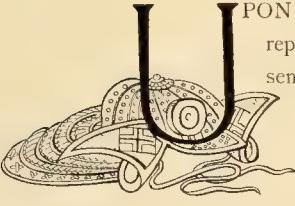




XIII.

JAPAN'S COMMERCIAL AND POLITICAL INTERCOURSE  
WITH FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

(Concluded.)

UPON a Japanese being asked to name the necessities of life, he replies at once, "rice and charcoal," those being his staple representatives of food and fuel. In mediæval times a horse-load of charcoal cost a hundred *cash*; to-day the same quantity costs 1.40 *yen*. Here again we have the same ratio as that found in the case of rice, 1 to 14. Linen cloth, also, as noted in a previous chapter, was a standard of value in the ancient as well as the middle ages. Its value in the eighth century was officially fixed at 15 *mon* per roll of 30 feet (one *tan*), which quantity cannot be procured now for less than 60 *sen*, or forty times the old figure. In the field of ordinary labor, too, we find a marked variation. During the eighth century the ten days' forced labor which a farmer had to perform annually to official order was declared commutable for 15 *mon*; in the ninth century the figure was doubled; and under the Tokugawa Regency labor was assessed at 5 *mon* per diem, in other words, 5 *go* of rice, which quantity, as we have seen, was supposed to represent the consumption of a laboring adult. At present, a laborer's daily wage, taking the lowest figure, is 20 *sen*, or forty times the rate of Tokugawa times. Thus rice, the staple of national diet, has appreciated only fourteen-fold since the seventeenth century, whereas the earnings of the laborer have increased forty-fold. To put the case differently, the workingman at present earns seven days' rations of rice by one day's toil, whereas in the seventeenth century a day's work meant a day's rice. The difference is that he can afford to eat rice now and has come to regard it as a necessity, not a luxury. If any other illustration be desired of the marked change that has taken place in the purchasing power of money in Japan, it is furnished by a decree issued in 1617, which fixed the charge for a night's lodging in an inn on the great trunk road at 4 *cash*; that is to say, about one and a half cents for dinner, bed and breakfast. The same accommodation now costs fifty *sen*, which is 125 times the old figure, if the rates in copper alone be considered, and sixteen times, if the *débâcle* in the sterling value of silver be taken into account.

These details are wearisome, but without them the reader can form no intelligent conception of the conditions under which Japan's foreign commerce and foreign intercourse commenced in the fifteenth century, nor appreciate the difficulties that attended the resumption of her relations with the outer world fifty years ago. It will be perceived that the

people of the island empire were ill-equipped for the tradal operations in which their Portuguese visitors invited them to engage in the days of Mendez Pinto and Francis Xavier. They were eager, indeed, to acquire novel products, but they had never been suffered to temper their curiosity by independent experience. If any one ventured — as many did whenever a chance



POUNDING RICE.

offered — to forestall the customs officials, and purchase articles imported from China before their value had been fixed by a government not merely fond of its own perquisites but also firmly persuaded that to allow foreigners to benefit by Japanese competition would be thoroughly false statecraft, such a person risked the punishment of three years' imprisonment with hard labor and the confiscation of the goods he had bought. Moreover, since an informer in such cases received one half of the confiscated articles, the difficulty of evading the vigilance of the law cannot have been small. On the other hand, the fact that Chinese *cash* circulated freely in Japan must have greatly facilitated the commerce which, as we have observed, had been carried on fitfully with the neighboring empire for centuries before the coming of the Portuguese. Nor were the latter placed at any special disadvantage. It is true that for them tokens of copper and iron signified merely so much old metal. But they could receive and pay gold and silver by weight, since with such a method of exchange the Japanese had long been familiar, and very soon after the arrival of the "black ship" at Tane-gashima, steps were taken by that most astute statesman, the *Taiko*, to meet the commercial need of the time by striking gold coins in large quantity, and simultaneously putting into general circulation ingots of silver stamped with the marks of official assayers and weighers. Still, if technical obstacles did not exist, the Japanese labored under two great disqualifications, namely, almost absolute inexperience and a traditional habit of relying on official tutelage

in commercial affairs. He was accustomed to exchange his staple commodities at prices fixed by law; he did not enjoy the privilege of discriminating between the intrinsic values of the coins issuing from the mint, but was required to render blind deference to their superscriptions; his commercial conscience had been blunted by repeated evidences of the government's financial unscrupulousness; tradition and the inflexible rules of caste taught him to place trade at the lowest point in the scale of human occupations, and he lived in an essentially military age when the business type was out of touch with its environment and had not yet attained any appreciable development. Observing these antecedents, we now find ourselves confronted by a strange consequence. It was not inconsistent with the spirit of such a time that raids and forays should be made into the territories of neighboring states, and that the rudimentary instinct of gain should find satisfaction in plunder won at the point of the sword. It has been shown, in fact, that raids and forays of that kind attained extraordinary dimensions in the very era now under review. But that national enterprise should turn into the paths of commerce, and that the people should suddenly exhibit a marked faculty for engaging with vigor and success in the routes of peaceful trade where countries like Portugal, Spain, Holland and England were then supposed to enjoy a monopoly, was a result altogether at variance with any reasonable anticipation. Yet that is what happened. Between the coming of the Portuguese in 1542 and the closing of Japan to the outer world in 1636, the Japanese established commercial relations and inaugurated a trade of more or less volume with no less than twenty foreign markets. The reputation that Japan subsequently acquired owing to more than two centuries of semi-seclusion has hidden these facts from general observation, but they are none the less historical.

Two things present themselves clearly to our view: first, that there was originally no evidence whatever of a disposition to impose restrictions on the comings and goings of Western traders; and, secondly, that the benefits of commerce, as exemplified by the doings of those traders, impelled Japan to immediate and enthusiastic imitation. Portuguese ships were made free to visit any part of



RICE CUTTING IN THE FIELDS NEAR OMORI, BETWEEN TOKYO AND YOKOHAMA.

the realm. To the Dutch and English, when they came in the early years of the seventeenth century, similar freedom of commerce was granted. They received written authorization, over the vermilion stamp of the Tokugawa Shogun, to "conduct trade without molestation in any port or at any place in Japan." There was no imposition of onerous taxes or duties. Presents had to be made to local officials and to the central government, but their total value never exceeded five per cent of the nominal cost of the cargo on account of which they were made.

Under these circumstances trade ought to have prospered. Assuming that the nation possessed any commercial instincts, however rudimentary, and that profitable opportunities existed,—two assumptions amply justified by the evidence of history,—such absence of restriction and such freedom from crippling imposts should have been attended by the prosperous results that similar conditions have everywhere produced. Yet, eighty-seven years after this conspicuous inauguration of foreign intercourse, Japan made an almost complete reversal of her national policy, adopted an exclusive attitude, substituted distrust and aversion for the confidence and amity of her previous mood, and asserted her right of isolation with fierce and unrelenting imperiousness. What had happened to produce this remarkable metamorphosis? That is what we have now to inquire.

Close upon the footsteps of the pioneers of trade followed the pioneers of Christianity. They too were hospitably received. It is true that the sequel of their propagandism shows Japan resorting to the fires of persecution and the cross of the martyr with all the merciless vehemence of contemporary Europe, and that the story of their doings was thus projected upon the pages of history in appalling outlines. But the mood ultimately educated by their proceedings differed widely from the mood with which they were originally welcomed. That fact cannot be too emphatically asserted. If these Portuguese and Spanish apostles of the Nazarene together with their Japanese disciples fell victims at the last to the wrath of the nation whose heart they had come to win, the cause is to be sought in their own faults and in the intrigues of their foreign rivals rather than in the prejudice or bigotry of the Japanese. They taught to Japan the intolerance which she subsequently displayed toward themselves, and they provoked its display by their own imprudence. We cannot pause here to demonstrate these propositions by detailed reference to the annals of Christian propagandism in mediæval Japan. The broad historical facts must suffice, and in tracing them our object shall be rather to obtain indications of the nation's character than to survey the sequence of events.

During the interval of 261 years—1281 to 1542 A. D.—that separated the Mongol invasion from the opening of intercourse between Japan and Europe, the spirit of lawless adventure prevalent throughout the Occident found its counterpart in the conduct of the Japanese. It might be supposed that their lust for fighting would have been amply sated by the perpetual domestic combats that kept their own country in a ferment from shore

to shore. But although rich prizes fell to the share of the leaders in these internecine struggles, the ordinary *samurai* gained little by them. His pay was scanty, his prospect of promotion limited, and it may well be that he sometimes turned with loathing from the constant necessity of bathing his hands in the blood of his own countrymen. At all events, piracy became a favorite occupation.

Throughout all the tumults and changes of dynasty by which China was thrown into commotion from the earliest times, Japan remained beyond the range of disturbance from abroad. Twice, indeed, armadas were directed against her by Kublai Khan, the great Manchu captain. But they were duly organized national undertakings, justifiable even by modern canons of inter-state morality. What students of her history find remarkable is the immunity that she enjoyed from Chinese marauders. Never at any period of the Middle Kingdom's history, whether in mediæval times or in modern, have these marauders been effectually restrained by the forces at the disposal of the government. It would have been within the bounds of ordinary probability that some of them should extend their excursions to the coasts of Japan. But nothing of the kind is on record, and if it did not occur before the Mongol invasions, it was less likely to occur afterward when the annihilation of Kublai's expeditions had won respect for Japan throughout the whole of the East. The Japanese, however, showed no reciprocity of abstention. They appear to have regarded the littoral provinces of their neighbors as fair fields for raid and foray. Some historians suggest that the fiercely aggressive temper of the time was kindled, or at any rate fanned into active flame, by the Mongol assaults. But the course of events is not consistent with that theory. The defeat of Kublai's armadas, on the contrary, was succeeded by an interval of comparative quiescence, partly, no doubt, because the Japanese appreciated the might of which such formidable efforts were an evidence, and partly because their sea-going capacities still remained comparatively undeveloped. But from the middle of the fourteenth century it became a species of military pastime in Japan to fit out a little fleet of war-boats and make



TEACHING YOUNG GIRLS TO WRITE.

a descent upon the coast of Korea or China. The annals of the sufferers, naturally more credible in some respects than those of the aggressors, show that what the Norsemen were to Europe in early ages, and the English to Spanish America in times contemporary with those of which we write, the Japanese were to China. They made descents upon the Shantung Promontory—the same place where their posterity in modern times were destined to annihilate China's naval forces at Wei-hai-wei—and carried their raids far inland, looting and destroying villages and towns and then marching back leisurely to the coast, where they shipped their booty and sailed away when the wind suited. They repeated these outrages year after year on an increasing scale, until the provinces of Fuhkien, Chekiang, Kiangsu and Shantung—in other words, littoral regions extending over three degrees of latitude—were almost wholly overrun by the fierce freebooters. It is related in Chinese history that the commonest topics of conversation in this unhappy era were the descents of the Japanese on the dominions of the Middle Kingdom, the vessels taken by them, the towns pillaged and sacked, the provinces ravaged. They are spoken of as "sovereigns of the sea," and although forty-nine fortresses were erected by the much-harassed people along the eastern coasts, and although one man out of every four of the seaboard population was enrolled in a coast-guard army, the raiders made nothing of such obstacles. The immemorial iteration of Chinese military experiences was again exemplified. Defeated generals laid accusations of incapacity and treachery at each other's doors, and being all alike denounced by the censors, the best were recalled and punished and the worst left in command. The Japanese pirates, it should be remembered, were not backed by any reserve of national force: they were private marauders, mere soldiers of fortune, without even the open countenance or support of a feudal chieftain, though undoubtedly their enterprises were often undertaken in the secret interests of some local magnate. It stands to China's lasting humiliation that she was at last compelled to treat the freebooters as a national enemy and to move a large army against them. There is, indeed, an element of comicality in the situation as it existed at the time of which we write. China always perched upon a pedestal of ineffable loftiness; addressing her neighbors in forms of speech rigidly adapted to the height at which she supposed herself to stand above them, and solemnly registering the visits of their ambassadors as tribute-bearing missions: Japan lightly contemptuous of such pretensions; thrusting the magnificent empire's envoys into prison and keeping them there for months on some transparently petty pretext; crossing her neighbor's borders whenever and wherever she pleased and carrying away everything of interest or of value that came under her hand, yet never hesitating to send openly and courteously for a Buddhist sutra, a *celadon* vase, or a brocade altar-cloth if a desire for such objects suggested itself.

Korea underwent at Japan's hands experiences only a degree less harassing than those suffered by China, but failed altogether to find a remedy. Her feeble and ill-judged measures of retaliation served merely to provoke fresh aggression. It is unnecessary to speak of her

wrongs in detail, though they must not be omitted from any analysis of the relations between the two countries in modern times.

The interest of this chapter of Japanese history consists not merely in the materials that it furnishes for estimating the quality of Japanese spirit and Japanese fighting capacity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but also in the indication that it contains of the country's attitude toward foreign commerce and foreign intercourse at that epoch. Foreign commerce was regarded, not as a factor of national wealth, but as a means of enriching a few privileged individuals. Its profits were, for the most part, confined to two great families, the Ouchi in the case of China, and the So in the case of Korea, and restrictions were imposed upon its dimensions solely for the purpose of keeping it within reach of the prescribed control. Speaking generally, it may be said that the patronage of any one feudal chief or court noble involved the opposition or aroused the jealousy of some other, and not until the unification of the nation in modern times gave it a common interest in promoting factors of prosperity, did foreign commerce cease to be hampered by personal rivalries and political ambitions. As for foreign intercourse, its conveniences alone were considered, the obligations that it imposed being practically neglected. Japan drew freely upon China and Korea for whatever contributions they could make to her literary, religious and artistic equipment, but at the same time she allowed her subjects to pursue toward both countries a course of lawless violence that must have speedily involved her in war had either the Koreans or the Chinese seen any hope of engaging her successfully. There was no hope, however. She beat back their armadas; she carried fire and sword into their territories without even the semblance of a national effort; she imprisoned their envoys; she showed her total fearlessness of them in a hundred ways. But she never opposed the comings and goings of their people. There was no isolation on her side.

Such was the state of affairs when (1542) the first Europeans came to Japan. Their earliest experiences need not occupy our attention, but we may note that they arrived in a



HOUSE CLEANING.

piratical Chinese junk, and that they had for fellow-passenger a scholar of the Middle Kingdom who seems to have been imbued with something of the disdainful *hauteur* toward "outer nations" characteristic of his country's literati in all ages. He introduced the Portuguese as persons without any knowledge of the canons of etiquette or the mysteries of



A STREET IN THE YOSHIWARA, TOKYO.

This section of the city contains some of the most costly private dwellings in Japan and is a small town in itself, occupied entirely by the demi-monde.

the Portuguese adventurers at Tanegashima. They were accompanied by a young *samurai*, called Anjiro, who had escaped the fate of a murderer by flying from his country in the piratical junk that brought the Portuguese to Tanegashima.

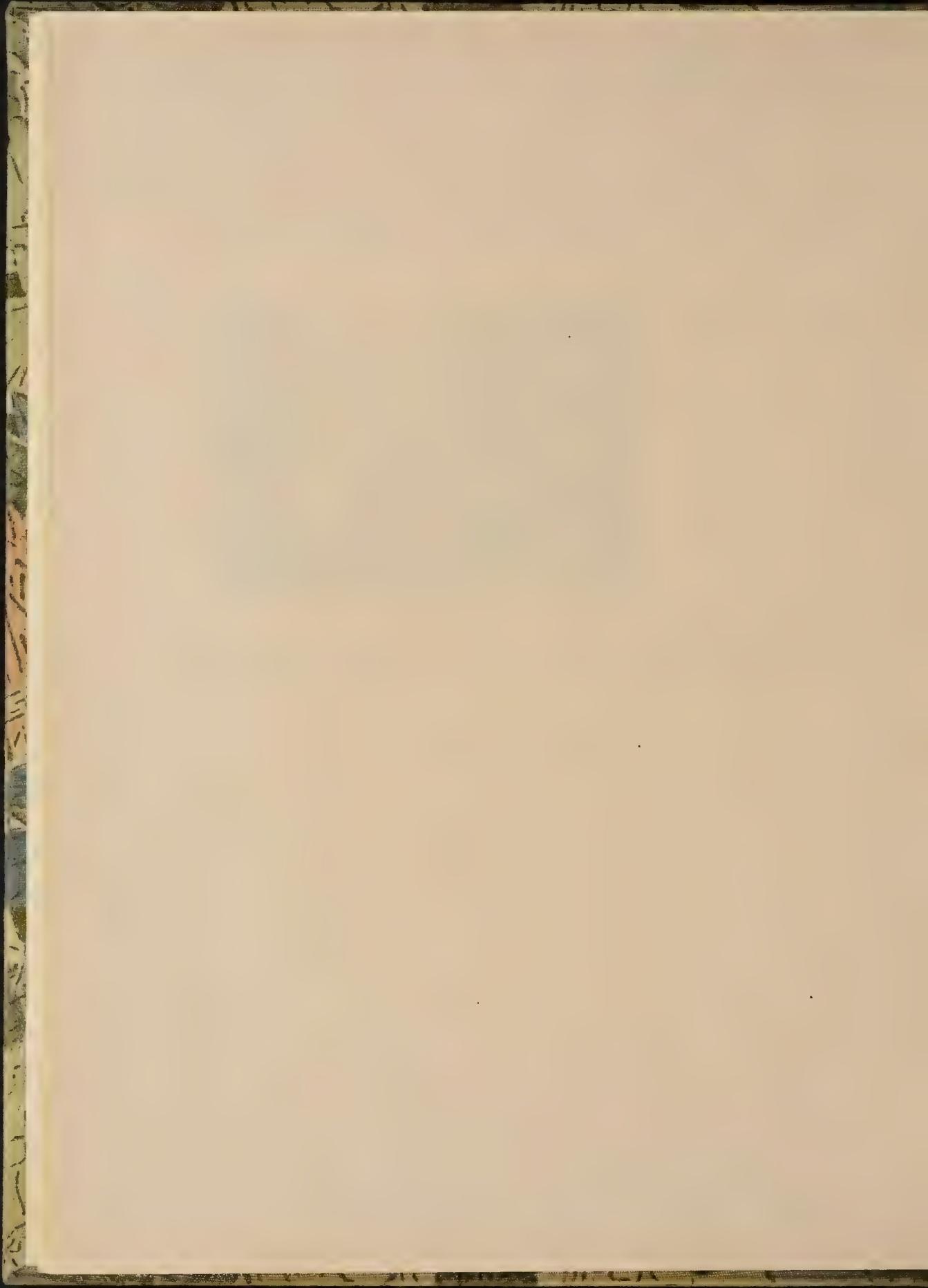
These are curious commentaries on the customs of the time: Japan's first Occidental visitors coming in a pirate vessel; her first preachers of Christianity employing a manslayer to interpret their homilies.

Christianity and foreign commerce presented themselves to the Japanese hand in hand, and there is no doubt that the marked success which the former achieved at first was due in large part to the favor with which the latter was regarded as a means of furnishing wealth and novel weapons of war to the feudal chieftains who enjoyed a monopoly of its control. The alien creed was, in fact, drawn from the outset into the vortex of Japanese politics, and by an evil chance its early patrons, though powerful at the moment, were destined soon to be stripped of their possessions and their influence. But its sun had risen high above the horizon before the first clouds made their appearance. In thirty years two hundred thousand converts were won, three monasteries, a college, a university and upwards of fifty churches were built, and it seemed as though the thirty-six provinces of which Japan then consisted might soon be included in the pale of Christendom. Such results, when compared with the achievements of missionaries in our own time, suggest either that the methods of mediæval

ideographic script, unacquainted with prandial ceremonies, unable to handle chop-sticks, and, in a word, only one grade higher than beasts of the field. But the Japanese paid not the slightest attention to this eulogy. They treated the newcomers with politeness and hospitality. The coming of Roman Catholic propagandists was subsequent by seven years to the arrival of

### RECEIVING A GUEST.

The Japanese are a very ceremonious people. They are self-respecting and therefore respect others. While very cordial in their greetings, they are never unduly familiar toward each other. Superior rank is acknowledged by an obeisance which does not appear to be servile. Social courtesy is universal even among the lower orders.







propagandism were superior to those of modern, or that some special receptivity for religious truth existed among the Japanese of the sixteenth century. But the fact is that the imported faith profited largely by two adventitious aids—its commercial associations and the marked disfavor into which Buddhism happened to have fallen at that epoch. The latter point deserves brief attention.

At the moment when the question of the State's attitude toward Christianity had to be answered, Ota Nobunaga, the first of the great triumvirate who finally rescued Japan from internecine strife, was approaching the zenith of his power in central and northern Japan. He aimed at restoring the administrative authority of the Emperor and putting an end to the sanguinary struggles carried on by the feudal chiefs throughout the Empire. His splendid successes soon placed him in a position to decide whether the foreign creed, already counting many disciples in the south, should be sanctioned or proscribed in the capital.

Historians delight to put wise epigrams into the mouths of illustrious men. It is related of Nobunaga that he dismissed the Christian problem by curtly observing that, since Japan already possessed a dozen different sects of religion, he saw no reason why she should not have a thirteenth. He may have couched his decision in that language, but as to the real motive of the decision there can be no doubt. He regarded the Buddhists as enemies of the State. During nearly seven centuries the arrogant pretensions of the priests had grown more and more defiant of official control. From an early era it had been the custom to intrust to them the care of mortuary tablets and the guardianship of tombs. Immense importance naturally attached to the discharge of such functions in a country where ancestral worship held the rank of a religion. It has already been shown, too, that the representatives of the Indian creed were closely associated with the progress of moral enlightenment and material prosperity, and that they figured prominently in maintaining relations with Japan's continental neighbors. If to that record we add the fact that, from the close of the seventh century, Buddhism had been employed to some extent by Japanese statesmen as an aid to the unification of the nation, we begin to appreciate the important position held by it in every sphere of the people's life. Rich gifts and extensive tracts of land were bestowed upon the temples, now by a superstitious sovereign or crafty statesman, now by some powerful feudal noble who desired to associate heaven with the prosecution of his ambitious designs; and in any national crisis—such as the Mongol invasions, for example—the coffers of the State were emptied into the sacred treasure-chests.

Prominent among the ancient superstitions of Japan was a belief that all evil influences had their abode in the northeast, the Demons' Gate (*Kimon*). Due northeast of the Imperial palace in Kyoto stood the mountain of Hiye, and there, to guard the Court against demoniacal approaches, Dengyo, a celebrated Buddhist priest of the ninth century, founded a monastery, which by and by grew to be a town of three thousand buildings, inhabited by from thirty to forty thousand monks, the great majority of whom could wield a glaive much

better than they could intone a litany. The example set at Hiye-no-yama, or Hiye-zan, as the place is now called, was soon followed by other congregations of religionists, and the powerful bands of tonsured soldiers (*Sohei*) thus organized became one of the most turbulent and unmanageable elements in the State. Theological questions troubled them little. They interested themselves much more vividly in the fortunes of the nobles from whom they derived their own wealth, and since they soon learned to employ the shrewd device of combining esoteric and exoteric influences by carrying the holy car of Buddha in their armed processions, their enmity became as formidable as their alliance was valuable. Nothing bears stronger testimony to the religious instincts of the Japanese than the fact that, despite the violent incursions perpetually made by the monks into the domain of politics, from the time of Shirakawa's reign (1073-1087) down to the second half of the sixteenth century, the monasteries almost invariably escaped the destruction that overtook the strongholds of nobles whose cause they espoused. Nobunaga was the first to measure out ruthless justice to these truculent religionists. A soldier before everything, he had no bowels of compassion for any obstacle that barred his military path. He thought no more of putting his own brother and his wife's father to the sword, than he did of deluging a monastery with blood before he reduced it to ashes, or of setting up, with imperious inconstancy, his own effigy among the images of the gods whose fanes he had annihilated. Some of the most powerful Buddhist associations had sided with his political enemies, and he determined not only to root them out, but also to destroy permanently their mischievous potentialities. It was at the moment when this fury against the Buddhist priests had reached destructive heat, that the Jesuit fathers applied to Nobunaga for a charter of propagandism, and received from him an extensive grant of land in Kyoto, a yearly allowance and authority to take up their residence in the capital. The Ota chief did not care two straws about Christianity. Religion in any guise occupied an insignificant space on his moral horizon. His unique motive was to set up an opponent to the doctrine that had begotten such troublesome factors in the realm. Christianity was nothing to him for its own sake. As a rival of Buddhism it might be much.

From using the foreign faith for political purposes to suspecting it of political designs the interval was short, and Nobunaga's intelligence soon traversed it. His scrutiny of the Jesuits' methods—their profuse almsgiving, their tendance of the sick, their exercise of unprecedented medical skill—convinced him that they aimed at something more than saving men's souls, and he had begun to revolve plans for their expulsion when death overtook him at the hand of a traitor. But even the brief favor extended by him to Christianity had been disapproved by the man who avenged his fate and succeeded to his power, the celebrated Hideyoshi. The annals of the Jesuits ascribe to the meanest and paltriest motives the animosity that Hideyoshi ultimately displayed toward their faith. It is impossible to accept their evidently prejudiced verdict. Hideyoshi, like all Japanese of his era, was without any experience of international intercourse, but his statecraft rose to the height of genius. It is

inconceivable that a man of such profound insight could fail to detect the political import of the credentials from secular authorities with which the Jesuit fathers came provided, or to appreciate the material character that the conquests of the cross might be made to assume. He had learned by heart every lesson that the annals of his own country could teach. He knew how Buddhism, originally an instrument in the hands of Japanese statesmen, had ultimately defied their authority, raised itself even above the Imperial Court, and developed military strength with which the most powerful feudal nobles hesitated to cross swords. The story of the very sect against which the animosity of his leader and patron, Nobunaga, burned most relentlessly, showed what even a creed of gentle tenets and refining influences like Buddhism might become in the hands of militant propagandists. He saw that Christianity evinced nothing of the eclecticism or adaptability which had prevented a collision between Buddhism and the ancestral cult of the Japanese. The Jesuit fathers spurned all compromise. The disciple of every other faith was to them an infidel, a pagan, a child of the devil. Their fierce zeal, heated white in fires of which no reflection had yet been seen on the horizon of Japan, drove them from the outset to excesses of intolerance that presaged a national catastrophe as soon as Buddhism found itself forced to fight for its life.

Hideyoshi owed much of his wonderful success to an exceptional sense of proportion. He possessed the rare gift of measuring with precision the strength of offence or defence that a given combination of men or things would develop under certain contingencies. Nothing is more improbable than that he underestimated the immense potentialities for resistance, or, if need be, for aggressive destructiveness, possessed by Japanese Buddhism in his time; an *imperium in imperio*, dowered with vast stores of wealth, wielding a military organization which, were its various parts combined against a common foe, would hold the whole realm at its mercy, and historically capable of efforts so puissant even for petty purposes of sectarian squabbles that their supreme exercise in a life-and-death struggle with Christianity could not be contemplated without the gravest misgivings. Vaguely, perhaps, but still in outlines



WOODEN BRIDGE AT IWAKUNI.

sufficiently distinct to suggest a lurid picture, these eventualities doubtless presented themselves to his strong intelligence, and as the cries of dying priests and the crash of falling temples reached his ears from Kiushu, where the Christian propagandists were harrying their opponents with the fagot and the sword, he may well have begun to appreciate the dimensions of the impending catastrophe. He did not, however, immediately take steps to evince his disapproval of militant Christianity, nor when the time seemed ripe for proscribing it did he proceed to extremities. The crucifixion spear does not appear to have suggested itself to him as a prudent weapon for combating moral convictions. It is true that in the heat of his first anti-Christian demonstration he caused two men to be executed, and it is also true that he deprived a Christian noble of his fief by way of penalty for the constancy of his faith. But for the rest he remained content with the razing of a few chapels and a public declaration that he would not tolerate on the part of Christian propagandists any recourse to the violent methods of which the country had garnered such painful experiences in the case of the Buddhist *Sohei*, and of which the Christians had already shown themselves ruthless employers. There is nothing to show that, had Christianity thenceforth relied solely on legitimate weapons, the pulpit, education and example, paying due respect to the laws of the land and extending to others the toleration that it claimed for itself—there is nothing to show that it might not have retained, strengthened and extended the footing it had gained in Japan, and that the

Japanese might not then have finally entered the arena of international intercourse and competition, instead of isolating themselves for nearly three centuries until they had been almost hopelessly distanced in the race of material civilization.

But a new influence now made itself felt. The Jesuits were assailed by an enemy from within the fold.

Hitherto they had been without sectarian rivals in Japan. Their precedence in the field was regarded as constituting a title to its monopoly, and a papal bull had assigned the Far-Eastern islands as their special diocese. Now, however, the Spaniards took steps to dispute their ascendancy, by sending an envoy from the Philippines to complain of some



A LUNCH PARTY.

Serving macaroni (made of buckwheat) and saké.

alleged illegality on the part of Portuguese merchants. In the envoy's train came a number of Franciscans, and when the Jesuits remonstrated and called attention to the papal bull, the Franciscans gave a historical reply. They had observed the bull, they said, since they had not come as religionists but as members of an ambassador's suite, and having thus by lawful means surmounted the difficulty of getting to Japan, there was no longer any just impediment to their preaching there. Very soon they made their presence felt in a pernicious manner. Hitherto the Japanese had been left to draw their own conclusions as to the political contingencies of Christian propagandism. Thenceforth they received ample material for suspicion from the Portuguese and the Spaniards themselves, for each roundly accused the other of aggressive designs against Japan's integrity. Hideyoshi strictly interdicted any attempt at religious propagandism on the part of the Franciscans, whose presence in the capital he had sanctioned in an ambassadorial capacity only. The Franciscans paid not the smallest heed to his veto. Possibly they justified their disobedience by some casuistry as convincing as their retort to the Jesuits. If so, they failed to make the point clear to Hideyoshi. He ordered their arrest, and sent them, with three Jesuit fathers and seventeen—some records say twenty-four—native Christians, to Nagasaki, where they were executed. The scene was transferred to canvas by a nameless European artist of great ability. Photographs of his wonderfully realistic but little known picture reached Japan a few years ago through diplomatic channels. Crucifixion was the method of execution, but not crucifixion as practised in the Occident. The victims were tied to a cross and pierced from left and right simultaneously by sharp spears inserted below the ribs and thrust diagonally toward the shoulders. Death was generally instantaneous, but sometimes the stabs had to be repeated. The painting is true in every detail. It portrays, without exaggerating, the racial types of the victims and their slayers, the vinous swagger of the semi-brutalized executioner, the ecstatic calm of the fathers, and the awful perspective of the long line of crosses with their bleeding burdens.

This was Hideyoshi's protest, first, against the risk of Japan's becoming a battlefield for rival creeds from abroad; secondly, against the defiant attitude assumed by the strangers toward secular authority; and, thirdly, against the political intrigues of which the Christians accused themselves and of which he had long suspected them. It is worth while to observe these facts carefully, for they lie at the root of all Japan's foreign intercourse.

Ieyasu, the great Tokugawa chieftain, who succeeded to the work of domestic pacification already carried within sight of completion by Nobunaga and Hideyoshi, did not at first give any clear indication of the course that he intended to pursue toward the padres and their following. But there can be no doubt that the Christian problem had attracted his keen attention long before the indisputable control of administrative affairs came into his hands (1600 A. D.). No Japanese statesman could afford to ignore a question which was producing not only widespread disturbance but also a startling change in the relations

between the classes. In all times one of the results of Christian propagandism in Oriental countries has been to remove the converts beyond the unchallenged control of the civil authorities and to elevate their spiritual guides to the rank of secular protectors. The members of the Christian community learn to believe that their conversion differentiates them from the mass of their unregenerate nationals, and opens to them a tribunal of appeal against any exaction or injustice to which the latter may be exposed. Modern diplomatists have often been required to consider that outcome of missionary enterprise.

A cognate problem forced itself on the attention of Japanese statesmen from a very early period. The Emperor Shirakawa (1073-1087), who at the zenith of his power complained that only three things in his realm defied his authority,—the chance of the dice, the waters of the Kamo river, and the priests of Buddha,—was ultimately obliged to invoke the assistance of the military nobles against the contumacious proceedings of the Buddhist prelates, thus inaugurating between the followers of the sword and the *sutras* an era of feuds which culminated in the fierce exterminations resorted to by Ota Nobunaga. From the outset a similar spirit of independence was educated by Christian propagandism in Japan. It is characteristic of human nature that men conspicuously prone to encroach upon the sphere of another's rights are proportionately uncompromising conservatives of their own. The Roman Catholic priest's stout defiance of pagan interference in the foreign fields of his labor was but another form of the awful zeal that impelled him to protect orthodoxy with the fagot and the rack in Europe. Ieyasu mounted the administrative throne at a time when these things forced themselves upon political attention. He had seen Franciscan monks trample upon the veto of the *Taiko* within the very shadow of the latter's palace. He had seen Christians in Nagasaki successfully ignore the order of the men appointed by Hideyoshi to restrain them. He had seen the padres resume their preaching almost immediately after the issue of Hideyoshi's prohibitory edict. He had seen the unprecedented spectacle of *heimin* (commoners) accepting from the alien creed a commission to oppose *samurai* authority. He had seen the persecuting intolerance of the foreign faith constitute a new menace to the tranquillity which it was his hope, and seemingly his mission, to restore to his tired countrymen. We can scarcely doubt, therefore, that Ieyasu was opposed to Christianity. Besides, whether from policy or conviction, he was himself a devotee of Buddhism. He carried in his bosom an image of Amida, and in seventy-three battles he had donned no armor, trusting to the protection of the god he worshipped. We have nothing to do with the quality of this great leader's piety. He may have been prompted mainly by a desire to win to his cause influences which, when opposed, had shown themselves strong and mischievous. But that a man who encouraged his followers to regard him as an incarnation of one of Yakushi's Arhats, and professed to consider a miniature eidolon of Kuro Honzon better protection than cuirass or hauberk against sword or arrow, should ever have seriously entertained the idea of countenancing Christianity, is an unreasonable supposition. On the

other hand, conciliation and tolerance were essential factors in the administration of Ieyasu. He never resorted to violence where his end seemed capable of being compassed by tact. Thus, although, in the year 1600, he proclaimed his policy by means of an edict banishing Christian propagandists, as the *Taiko* had done in 1517, like the *Taiko* he took no conclusive steps to enforce the order. For a moment, indeed, it seemed as though the edict would be followed by drastic measures. Shortly after its issue the Christian places of worship in Kyoto were destroyed and several followers of the faith met their death. But active persecution ceased there, so far as the central authorities were concerned. In the provinces, however, the Christians had to endure suffering. They reaped as they had sown. We need not enter into details. They bear further testimony to the fact that the fortunes of the Western creed in each district depended on the prejudice or caprice of the feudal chief governing the province, and were consequently exposed to many of the intrigues, jealousies and ambitions which disfigured the era.

Ieyasu made no attempt to interfere between the victims and their local persecutors. He had announced his disapproval of Christianity and he waited on the course of events. Meanwhile, despite local opposition and the nominal ban of the central government, the foreign creed constantly gained. In the year 1605 the number of converts was estimated at from six hundred thousand to two millions, and from Sendai in the north to Kagoshima in the south its propagandists preached openly and its adherents worshipped in their own chapels. The time had come to choose between final toleration and resolute extirpation. "It is much easier," says Lecky, "to show what men did or taught than to realize the state of mind that rendered possible such actions or teaching." The whole of the Tokugawa chief's career up to the time of which we are now writing is the career of a lover of mercy, a user of gentle methods, a believer in the softening influences of time. How was the conviction forced upon such a man that he must do violence to his instincts? How was he persuaded to issue on January 27, 1614, a proclamation ordering the banishment of



RESULT OF AN EARTHQUAKE AT NAGOYA.

the propagandists and leaders of Christianity, the destruction of their churches and the compulsory recantation of their doctrines? Probably the genuine and complete explanation of Ieyasu's motive is to be found in the words of the edict itself: "The Christians have come to Japan not only to carry on commerce with their ships, but also to propagate an evil

creed and subvert the true doctrine, to the end that they may effect a change of government in the country and thus usurp possession of it. This seed will produce a harvest of unhappiness. It must be eradicated." That Ieyasu and his son, Hidetada, in whose favor he had abdicated the *Shogunate* nine years previously to the issue of the above edict, were fully per-

It only remains to inquire

HAKONE LAKE AND VILLAGE, WITH THE EMPEROR'S PALACE IN THE DISTANCE.

suaded of the truth of these words, there can be little question. how they were led to entertain such a belief; why they deemed it necessary to exchange their previous attitude of negative disapproval for one of positive extermination.

Several reasons present themselves. The first is the issue of a bull in 1608 granting to all orders of Christianity free access to Japan. From the point of view of Rome the step was natural. Japan had hitherto been a papally forbidden land to all save the Jesuits. Paul the Fifth simply rescinded the veto. But from the point of view of Ieyasu the incident assumed a very different aspect. The *Taiko* had issued an edict ordering the withdrawal of all Christian propagandists from Japan. The *Shogun* had repeated the interdict. The pope of Rome ignored both vetoes and authoritatively threw Japan open to Jesuits, Dominicans, Franciscans, anybody and everybody wearing a cowl or carrying a Testament. The second reason is that Ieyasu found in Christianity a formidable obstacle to the realization of his own political projects. After the battle of Sekigahara there remained only one source of possible peril to the peace which it was the Tokugawa leader's highest ambition to secure for his country. That source was Hideyori, the *Taiko*'s son. It has been alleged that the *Taiko*, on the eve of death, sought and obtained from Ieyasu a promise to support Hideyori. But the scope of the promise is obscure. At all events, Ieyasu did not consider himself bound by it further than to leave to Hideyori undisturbed possession of Osaka castle and of ample



revenues. Hideyori's principal supporters took a different view, however. They intrigued to effect the overthrow of the Tokugawa, and the Jesuit fathers threw in their lot with them, as did also a multitude of Christians. The castle at Osaka with its stupendous battlements and almost impregnable defences became a resort for persecuted or discontented Christians from all parts of the Empire. The padres can scarcely be reproached for the part they chose at that crisis. Scarcely a faint hope remained that their faith would ever be sanctioned by the Tokugawa, whereas with the *Taiko*'s son at the head of the administration and owing his elevation in a large degree to Christian aid, there would have dawned for the fathers and their flock an era not merely of State tolerance but also of patronage beyond all precedent or expectation. Then indeed events might have justified the premature pæan of the Dillingen chronicler, that Japan had been "won over and incorporated into the true fold of the Christian church." Such a prize was worth playing for at heavy risks. The padres played for it and failed. Ieyasu's sentence of banishment and extermination overtook them in 1614, and in the following year Osaka castle was given to the flames after a struggle that is said to have cost a hundred thousand lives.

Yet another reason for the Tokugawa chief's recourse to drastic measures must be noted. The Dutch, concluding a commercial convention with Japan in 1610, naturally sought to oust the Portuguese from the monopoly that they held of Japanese trade, and to that end they roundly accused both Portuguese and Spaniards of prostituting Christian propagandism to political intrigue, and concealing designs against Japan's integrity under the cloak of her religious regeneration. The English, who soon afterwards gained access to Japan's markets, adopted the tactics of the Dutch. It was easy to show from contemporary history that such accusations rested on bases at least highly plausible. Nobunaga had more than suspected something of the kind thirty years before either Dutch or English preferred the accusation; Hideyoshi had shared the suspicion, and Ieyasu, with a wider range of experience to guide him, would probably have passed from suspicion to certainty even without the testimony of Hollanders or British. A good deal has been urged in modern times by way of apology for the conduct of the English and Dutch. Some have even denied the charge on behalf of one or the other, or both. We fail to see any occasion for either repudiation or extenuation. If we consider the relations between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, between England and Spain, and between Holland and Portugal at that era, and if we recall the canons of commercial combats and the rules of the religious lists at the beginning of the seventeenth century, we shall see that things fell out in Japan exactly as might have been predicted.

Looking at the facts as here set down, the impartial historian is compelled to admit that what Japan did in 1614, most European states would have done under the same circumstances at the same epoch. The impartial historian will probably go a great deal farther. He will conclude that the measures of expulsion and eradication adopted by Japan in 1614 would have been adopted forty or fifty years earlier by any European state under pressure of

the same incentives. No European state would have tolerated for a moment the things that were perpetrated in the name of Christianity between 1560 and 1576 in Nagasaki and Bungo, and between 1597 and 1600 in Higo. No European state would have suffered the propagandists of a foreign faith to settle within its borders and excite a section of its population to make a holocaust of the national places of worship, and to stone, slaughter and banish their priests. If Japan endured these outrages for a time, it was because her strength of national self-assertion was paralyzed by its dissipation. The central administration had no power to prescribe a uniform policy to the multitude of irresponsible and semi-independent principalities into which the country was divided, and in the rival ambitions of the various territorial magnates whose cause they promoted with arms and gold, the missionaries found temporary safety and patronage. The integration of the Empire, first under Hideyoshi, subsequently and more completely under Ieyasu, was the signal for recourse to measures which, were they embodied in a chapter of contemporary Occidental history, would not have seemed either incongruous or abnormal.

We shall not attempt to describe the struggle that ensued between religious fanaticism and the exterminating zeal of officials who believed themselves to be obeying the highest instincts of patriotic statecraft. The story has already occupied many pens. Besides, our purpose here is not to trace the mere sequence of incidents, but to expose their causes. Terrible things were done, things worthy of Torquemada and Ximenes, and the long tragedy culminated in a rebellion which involved the death of from thirty to forty thousand Christians, and the final expulsion of the Portuguese from Japan. The rebellion—celebrated in history as the "Shimabara Revolt"—was brought to a close in the spring of 1638.

More than a twelvemonth before its outbreak there had been promulgated an edict of the most drastic nature. It declared that any Japanese subject attempting to go abroad, or any Japanese subject already abroad who attempted to return home, should be executed; it directed that all foreigners professing Christianity should be imprisoned at Omura; it forbade Eurasian children to reside in Japan and it decreed banishment for any persons adopting a Eurasian child and severe punishment for their relatives. Four years later the Dutch were required to confine themselves to Deshima. They had succeeded in effectually prejudicing the Japanese against the Portuguese and the Spaniards, but they had not succeeded in preserving any large measure of respect for themselves. These most cruel and illiberal measures crowned Japan's policy of restriction and isolation—a policy which may be said to have commenced on a radical scale with the proclamation of Ieyasu in 1614 and to have culminated in the imprisonment of the Dutch at Deshima in 1641 by his grandson, Iyemitsu, the third Tokugawa *Shogun*.

In that interval another step wholly destructive to maritime enterprise was taken by the same Iyemitsu. He ordered that all vessels of sea-going capacity should be destroyed, and that no craft should thenceforth be built of sufficient size to venture beyond home waters.

## ARRANGING FLOWERS.

The arrangement of flowers is both an art and a science in Japan. The guiding principle is not contrast of color but linear effect, and a certain symmetry without regularity. Traditional rules established by the various "flower schools" have prevailed since the sixteenth century. The subject, which is intricate and difficult, cannot be fully appreciated by a foreigner, but those who have studied it carefully assert that it is "immeasurably superior to the barbaric massing of colors that constitutes the whole of the corresponding art of the West."







A more complete metamorphosis of a nation's policy could scarcely be conceived. In 1541 we find the Japanese celebrated or notorious throughout the whole of the Far East for exploits abroad; we find them known as the "Kings of the Sea;" we find them welcoming foreigners with the utmost cordiality and opposing no obstacles whatever to foreign commerce or even to the propagandism of foreign creeds; we find them so quick to recognize the benefits of trade and so apt to pursue them that in the space of a few years they establish commercial relations with no less than twenty over-sea markets; we find them authorizing the Portuguese and the English to trade at every port in the Empire; we find, in short, all the elements requisite for a career of commercial enterprise, ocean-going adventure and international liberality. In 1641 everything is reversed. Trade is interdicted to all Western people except the Dutch, and they are confined to a little island 200 yards in length by 80 yards in width. The least symptom of predilection for an alien creed is punished with awful rigor. Any attempt to leave the limits of the realm involves decapitation. Not a ship large enough to pass beyond the shadow of the coast may be built.

For all these changes Christianity was responsible. The policy of seclusion adopted by Japan in the early part of the seventeenth century and resolutely pursued until the middle of the nineteenth was an anti-Christian, not an anti-foreign, policy. The fact cannot be too clearly recognized. It is the chief lesson taught by the events outlined above. Throughout the whole of that period of isolation Occidentals were not known to the Japanese by any of the terms now in common use—as *gwaikoku-jin*, *seiyo-jin* or *i-jin*, which embody the simple meanings, foreigner, Western, alien; they were popularly called *bateren* (padre). Thus completely had foreign intercourse and Christian propagandism become identified in the eyes of the people. And if we remember that "foreign intercourse" associated with Christianity had come to be synonymous in Japanese ears with foreign aggression, the subversal of the Mikado's sacred dynasty and the loss of the independence of the country of the gods, we are in a position to understand the attitude of the nation's mind toward this question.



FUJIVA HOTEL AT MIYANOSHITA.



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FUJIYA HOTEL AT MIYANOSHITA.

The commercial story of the Dutch in Deshima need not occupy us long. Their position was practically that of prisoners. An islet of reclaimed land, sixteen thousand yards in area, its surface some six feet above high-water mark, constituted their place of residence. The channel separating it from the mainland was spanned by a bridge having a strongly guarded gate at the shoreward end. There the Dutch merchants, numbering from a dozen to a score, were confined under conditions prescribed chiefly with the object of restraining any outward observance of Christianity. Divine services were strictly interdicted as well as every display of religious symbols. No Japanese women, except prostitutes, were permitted to enter this ghetto, nor might any of the Dutch residents leave the islet without due sanction. For the rest, these devotees of commerce experienced sufficiently courteous treatment, and throughout the two centuries of their sojourn they remained absolutely free from the murderous assaults to which foreigners were so frequently subjected after the opening of the country in 1858. It is plain that from the moment when Christianity presented itself to the Japanese in the light of a political agent, an alienator of patriotic sentiment and a perverter of national allegiance, their foreign policy was controlled by the necessity of differentiating commerce from religion. They were determined not to trade with any people acknowledging Christian affinities. The English, like the Dutch, were at first exempted from any religious disability, but when, after one failure in the field of Japanese commerce, they attempted to renew the enterprise at a later date (1673), the relationship of their sovereign to the King of Portugal, the home of the Jesuits, proved a fatal objection. The Japanese would have nothing to do with them. It was by the Dutch that this disqualification was urged against the English. Desiring to secure their own monopoly against British competition, they informed the Japanese government that Charles the Second of England was son-in-law to the King of Portugal. The Dutch, in short, contrived with consummate and unscrupulous skill to assist in checking Christian propagandism in Japan and to preserve for themselves alone the privileges of Japanese commerce.

It was, on the whole, a highly profitable though not very extensive privilege. The little community of merchants in Deshima were not allowed to develop their business without limit. At no time were the visits of their ships suffered to exceed two annually, and at the last the number of vessels was reduced to one a year. Nevertheless, in the disordered state of Japan's currency as described above, in the arbitrarily fixed ratios between gold, silver and copper, and in the people's ignorance of the value of foreign manufactures, the Dutch traders found an opportunity which they turned to such good account that between 1609 and 1858 they are said to have exported over two hundred million dollars in gold and silver, as well as two hundred thousand tons of copper. The Japanese of the present era speak of the Dutch trade as a gate through which the wealth of the country flowed away incessantly during a space of nearly two and a half centuries. Certainly foreign commerce, under the conditions then existing, never suggested itself as a factor of national prosperity.

Doubtless the reader will not yet have discovered any full explanation of the fact that the Dutch were so rigidly secluded in the island of Deshima. Having purged themselves by deed and declaration from all suspicion of complicity with the Christian propagandists, why should they not have enjoyed the same freedom of trade and residence that was permitted to the Chinese? History, as it has been written for us, does not furnish any conclusive answer to that question, but there is little room to doubt that the considerations which in the nineteenth century dictated the expediency of foreign settlements with narrow limits, were operative in the seventeenth also. The Dutch, following the example of the English, claimed exemption from native criminal jurisdiction, and it was therefore found necessary to segregate them from the Japanese community. Segregation would at any rate have offered the advantages of facilitating the imposition of religious restraints. But that consideration would scarcely have received such strong practical recognition had it not been reënforced by the jurisdictional dilemma. If a society of aliens are to live and trade in a country without being responsible to its penal laws or amenable to its criminal tribunals, it is evidently prudent that they should reside within the immediate control of their own authorities, and that their contact with the natives should be as restricted as possible. To the exigencies of "extra-territorial jurisdiction," as this peculiar outcome of Occidental and Oriental intercourse is called, the Dutch partly owed their imprisonment in Deshima two and a half centuries ago, and to the same cause European and American merchants, in modern times, wholly owed their imprisonment in the "foreign settlements" of Japan.

One further feature of the Deshima trade must be noted for the sake of the relation it bears to events of our own epoch, namely, the methods of transacting business as dictated by Japanese officials. The popular idea of foreign commerce has already been explained; it was regarded chiefly as the perquisite of a favored few, not as a factor of national wealth. Evidently the segregation of the foreign agents afforded special facilities for giving effect to that idea. The conduct of the trade could thus be subjected to strict control and its limits rigidly



SHITEE-SINGER.

fixed. Without entering into details, which naturally varied from time to time, the Japanese method may be said to have been based on the principle of excluding every element of competition by which the Dutch might profit. The goods imported at Deshima were purchased by a limited number of merchants in Kyoto, Sakai, Osaka, Nagasaki and Yedo, who held special licenses from the government. Skilled appraisers, representing these merchants, visited Nagasaki at the proper season, or resided there permanently. When a cargo arrived it was landed and examined by these appraisers, and their estimates of the market values of the various articles were embodied in a list for submission to the governor of Nagasaki or to delegates of the central government. The list was subsequently handed to the municipal officials, who in turn transmitted it to the Dutch in Deshima, and these on their side indicated their acceptance or rejection of the terms offered. They cannot have employed much latitude of choice in Japan at all events, for they were held in the grip of a virtually inflexible ring; but there remained to them always the alternative of reshipping the goods to some other Eastern market. Thereafter the Japanese agents, acting on behalf of the principals in the towns of which we have spoken, put in tenders for the imports, taking their own original appraisement as an upset figure. Whatever they bid over and above that figure went to the officials. More or less departure from this system is observable at later epochs, but the dominant idea—exclusion of the foreigner from the benefit of Japanese competition—seems to

have remained permanently effective.

Insignificant as was the trade at Deshima from a national point of view, and slight as was the traders' contact with the Japanese, it is probable that had that door of ingress been closed to progressive ideas, Japan might not yet have crossed the threshold of her new career. We have seen that the astute founder



A FARMER AND HIS WIFE WEIGHING AND REELING SILK.

of the Tokugawa dynasty of *Shoguns* cast the net of his power so deftly over the Empire as to entangle all his possible enemies in the meshes of his assured partisans. Successful revolt on the part of an individual feudatory, or successful intrigue by a clique of feudatories, became almost impracticable. He provided effectually against the repetition of that

spectacle so familiar to his countrymen, the seizure of administrative authority by one usurper and its speedy transfer to the hands of another amid scenes of turbulence and bloodshed. But the loyal instincts of the people, though lulled to temporary quiescence by the unwonted peace and prosperity resulting from the Tokugawa system, began to reassert themselves in proportion as the horrors of civil war faded into a distant past, and these instincts were constantly reënforced by the suggestions of foreign intercourse and the promptings of national enterprise. On the one hand the people saw the Emperor stripped of all administrative power and relegated to a life of insignificance in Kyoto, while the Tokugawa *Shoguns* exercised autocratic sway in Yedo and enjoyed all the benefits and privileges of authority; on the other they saw themselves officially excluded from every avenue of maritime and commercial enterprise, while a little band of aliens at Deshima monopolized the foreign trade of the Empire, their merchantmen and warships holding the dominion of the seas and their superior scientific knowledge conferring on them advantages too obvious to escape the humblest intelligence. It was inevitable that a spirit of rebellion should grow up against such an artificial and unwholesome state of affairs. The feudal nobles, indeed, did not awake to any perception of the necessity of change. They were either held fast in the vise of Tokugawa authority, or paralyzed by the sensuous seductions of the positions they enjoyed and by the machinations of their retainers, who played unceasingly the traditional game of grasping the substance of authority and leaving the shadow only to their lords. It was among these retainers that the longing for a new order of things grew stronger and stronger. Here and there men were found who, at the risk of imprisonment and death, braved the edicts against studying foreign sciences or betraying foreign proclivities, and learned to spell out Dutch books, or diligently gleaned scraps of rare information about the material civilization of Europe. The story of these courageous and earnest students reads like a romance. At one time we see them puzzling for a week over the import of a Dutch word; at another, laboriously compiling an anatomical vocabulary by fitting terms to the plates in a surgical treatise; now practising rigid economy for months to defray the monstrous cost of some insignificant volume imported by the Hollanders; anon publishing the results of their researches with stealth and apprehension as though to strive after knowledge were criminal. Any one seeking to become acquainted with the quality of Japanese perseverance and moral courage will do well to collect the records of these pioneers of Western civilization who between 1750 and 1850 gave its first genuine impulse to the great movement of reform in Japan. We are precluded from attempting to trace their history here. Our retrospect must be limited to the general facts that, when an American squadron came, in 1857, to break, by force or by suasion, the barrier of Japanese isolation, the nation was already seething with a spirit of unrest which, though as yet confined to the lower section of the military class, must soon have brought about the changes which the advent of foreigners precipitated.

It has been the habit of Western historians to associate a strong anti-foreign impulse

with the movement which culminated in the overthrow of the Tokugawa *Shogunate* and the restoration of administrative authority to the Emperor in 1867. They base that conclusion largely on the fact that the shibboleth of the time was *sonno joi*, which, being interpreted, signifies "reverence the sovereign and expel the stranger." Now, though it is quite true that these two cries were often heard in conjunction, it is by no means true that they were inseparable, or even that the latter had any intimate connection with the former. On the contrary, among the men who constituted the backbone of the agitation for restoring the Imperial administration, there were many who, having acquired, either by actual study or by



FLOODING AN IRIS GARDEN (NEAR TOKYO) BY MAN POWER.

These water-wheels are commonly used for irrigating throughout the country.

observation, a full sense of the disadvantages of continued national isolation, aimed not more zealously at the overthrow of the Tokugawa *Shogunate* than at reopening to commercial and maritime enterprise the routes which had been officially closed since the first half of the seventeenth century. We have to understand thus why this liberal element has been hidden from the observation of casual observers, and why the "stranger-expelling" impulse is represented by so many writers as underlying the great revolution of 1867. The explanation is not difficult. Though essentially imperialistic in its prime purpose, the revolution may be called democratic with regard to the *personnel* of those who planned and directed it. They were, for the most part, men without either official rank or social standing. Exponents simply of a theory and being without vicarious aids to push their views, they could not afford to neglect any factor likely to make for the success of their paramount object, the overthrow of the *Shogunate*. Anti-foreign feeling was such a factor. We have analyzed the nature of the conviction educated among the Japanese by eighty years of contact with the mediaeval methods of Christian propagandism and with the intrigues of foreign commercial rivals. We have seen that the outcome of these experiences was a fierce conviction that the integrity of the Empire could be preserved only by keeping out the strangers, the *bateren* (padres), who concealed political treachery under the cloak of religious zeal. Nine out of every ten Japanese *samurai* held fast by that faith, and would have deemed themselves

recusant to the dictates of patriotism had they failed to exterminate the foreign intruder wherever they found him. The remaining tenth were the little leaven of students and deep thinkers who, looking through the narrow window at Deshima, had caught a glimmering perception of the realities that lay beyond the horizon of their country's prejudice. Now, in the sequence of events, which may be learned from any history, it fell out that the responsibility of violating the traditions of three centuries and throwing down the barriers of national seclusion rested with the Tokugawa government in Yedo. The *Shogun*'s ministers signed the treaties with America, England, France and so forth from 1857 onward, and in that act the enemies of the *Shogunate* saw a pretext for winning to their cause all the conservative elements among the *samurai*. "Let us compass the downfall of the *Shogunate*," they said, "whatever weapons we have to employ for the purpose. The rest will follow in due course." It was thus that the agitation for restoring the Imperial administration came to be ostensibly allied with an anti-foreign movement. If the situation has perplexed subsequent observers, though surveying it with all the wisdom that follows the event, there is not much difficulty in conjecturing how it must have bewildered the foreign diplomats and statesmen upon whom devolved the duty of dealing with it at the moment. One cannot be surprised that when the torch was set to foreign legations; when foreign subjects and citizens fell under the swords of assassins in broad daylight on public thoroughfares; when vexatious obstacles presented themselves to the enjoyment of privileges promised by treaty, and when official reluctance to be liberal often assumed the semblance of deliberate bad faith, the foreign representatives, with one solitary exception, concluded that the Yedo government was in league with their enemies, and that the whole enigma had its origin in Oriental duplicity. Thus upon the head of the unfortunate administration in Yedo were visited the consequences of crimes perpetrated, in great part, with the unique object of adding to its embarrassments, and foreign governments, by levying fines and imposing humiliations upon the *Shogun*, who was honestly anxious to fulfil his treaty engagements toward them, played unwittingly into the hands of those who figured as the foes of foreign intercourse.

Great ends are often promoted by unconscious agents. It was essential for Japan's good that the *Shogunate* should fall, dragging down with it the fabric of military feudalism which must always have presented a powerful obstacle to the spread of progressive ideas and to the unification of the nation. But we may reasonably wish that these changes could have been effected without involving foreigners and Japanese in a labyrinth of mutual misconceptions, and sowing the seeds of prejudices which have borne a wretched crop of antipathy and ill-will. Let it be recorded, however, as a partially redeeming feature, that foreign governments twice distinguished correctly between friend and foe, and twice struck blows which powerfully contributed to undermine the strength of the anti-foreign sentiment by demonstrating that Japan could not stand for an instant against the warlike resources of Western civilization. In order to complete this part of our story, we may anticipate the course of

events so far as to say that the *Shogunate* fell (1867) almost without a struggle; that feudalism was abolished four years later (1871), the feudal chiefs surrendering their fiefs at the instance of their vassals by whom the revolution had been planned and consummated; that the administration of affairs was resumed by the Emperor with the aid of a cabinet formed of those vassals, and that Japan entered upon a rapid career of liberal progress. Anti-foreign demonstrations ceased as suddenly and completely as though the wand of an omnipotent genius of benevolence had been waved over the land. But anti-foreign feeling did not vanish as quickly as its visible ebullitions. Patriotism is tenacious of existence, and the *Jo-i* sentiment in Japan had its roots in patriotism. We shall see presently that it was afterward perpetuated and even reinspired by causes other than those already noted; but at the time when feudalism fell and the administration was centralized, the leaders of Japanese thought had no purpose closer to their heart than the dissipation of old prejudices and the promotion of international good-will. Some of them had been from the first convinced of the error of isolation; others, starting as vehement disciples of the ancient persuasion, had been converted by the stern lessons of experience, and were fired with all the zeal that marks earnest converts. The method that they adopted to disseminate the tenets of the new liberalism was practical and effective. Wherever among the men of social leading or intellectual light, they saw any one imbued with antipathy to things Occidental, they sent him to travel abroad at the charges of the State. The country's money could not be better spent, they thought, than in educating a disposition essential to the country's welfare. Need it be recorded that these travellers came home as keenly progressive as they had set out obstinately conservative? Often their new convictions proved inconveniently fervent. By way of atonement for their previous mistake they wanted to become pioneers in promoting some special feature of the wonderful civilization which they had witnessed, and when, as often happened, the State's resources could not bear the strain of so much ardor, or when these too lightly essayed innovations failed of success, there was disappointment merging sometimes into discontent and even scandal. But these things were mere blots upon the broad page of general progress.

From the day when feudalism fell Japan ceased to be an Oriental nation. We do not use the term "Oriental" in a disparaging sense. So far as Japan is concerned, the reader of these pages knows that she possessed a civilization of her own,—a refined, elaborate and highly developed civilization,—many phases of which suffer nothing, if indeed they do not gain, by comparison with the civilization of the foremost Western nations. "Oriental" in this context is employed with reference solely to the conservatism which has come to be regarded as a distinctive feature of East-Asiatic peoples; the conservatism that makes them cling to their old institutions, their old methods, their old laws, their old judicial procedure, their old means of communication, their old social organization and their old administrative machinery. From the trammels of such conservatism Japan shook herself free in a moment. The soundness of her instincts does not seem to have been impaired by long exile from

international competition and long lack of invigorating contact with foreign intellects. She knew the good when she saw it, and she chose it unhesitatingly without racial prejudice or false shame. It is possible, of course, to set forth an imposing catalogue of achievements verifying these assertions—a catalogue of laws compiled, judicial tribunals organized, parliamentary institutions introduced, railways built, telegraphs erected, postal services established, industrial enterprises developed, lines of steamers opened, educational systems started, a newspaper press created, and so forth. We shall have occasion presently to make special allusion to some of these things, but it is not with statistics that we wish to deal here so much as with the broad fact that Japan has differentiated herself completely from "Oriental nations," in the usually accepted sense of the term, and that her aspirations, her modes of thought, her impulses, her ideals and her tests of conduct must now be classed—not altogether, indeed, but certainly in the main—as Occidental. She may be regarded as a Western nation situated on the confines of the Far East,—a nation now, for the second time in its history, giving free play to the instincts of progress, of enterprise and of daring which, conspicuously displayed three centuries ago, were thereafter paralyzed by causes for which the Christian Occident, not the "pagan" Orient, is primarily responsible.



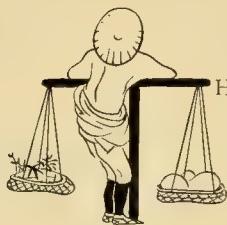
BUND (STREET FOLLOWING THE SHORE) AT KOBE.

Showing various legations, banks and commission houses.

XIV.

THE ATTITUDE OF JAPAN TOWARD FOREIGN RESIDENTS.

JAPANESE FINANCE.

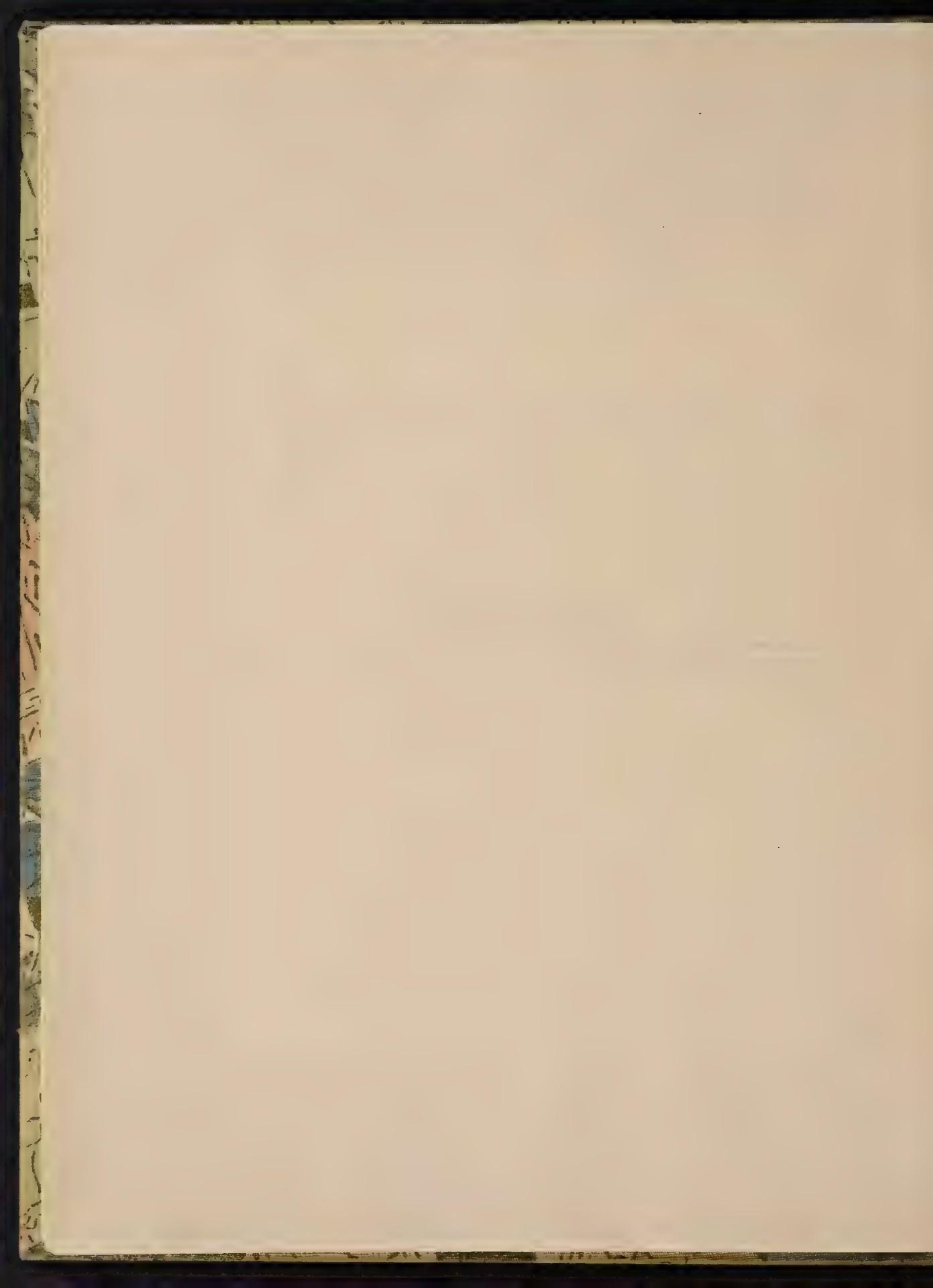


THE reopening of Japan to intercourse with the outer world was attended by a difficulty for which readers of what has been written above on the subject of currency will not be unprepared. In order to conduct trade operations in this long-secluded country some arrangement had to be made as to tokens of exchange. Practically the system pursued by the Dutch had been based simply on the weight of precious metal contained in Japanese coins, independently of their denominations and without any attempt to secure the circulation of foreign monetary tokens. The same system, so far as concerned weight, was adopted in 1858, but was supplemented by a provision that foreign coins should have currency in Japan. Foreign coins, the treaty said, must pass current for corresponding weights in Japanese coin of the same description,—gold for gold, silver for silver,—and during a period of one year after the opening of the ports the Japanese government must furnish to foreigners Japanese coins in exchange for theirs, equal weights being given and no discount taken for recoinage. This arrangement altogether ignored the ratio between the precious metals in the Japanese coinage system, and as the ratio stood at 5 to 1, whereas the ratio then ruling in Europe was 15 to 1, it resulted that the foreigner acquired the right of purchasing gold with silver in Japan at one third of the former's price in the Occident. To state the facts more explicitly, the treaty enabled foreigners to buy with 125 dollar-cents' worth of silver four Japanese silver tokens (called *bu*) which, in the Japanese coinage system, were exchangeable for a gold coin (called *koban*) intrinsically worth three times as much. Of course the treaty could not have been framed with the deliberate intention of securing to foreigners such an unjust advantage. As a result of long isolation, Japan's stores of the precious metals were not connected by the relation governing their interchangeable values in Europe, and foreign statesmen, when negotiating commercial treaties with her, cannot have had any idea of holding her to that particular outcome of her inexperience. Indeed, the treaty did not create any explicit right of the kind, for although it provided that foreign coins should be exchangeable against Japanese, weight for weight, it contained no provision as to the denominations of Japanese coins or the ratio of the precious metals in the Japanese monetary system.

The Japanese government, seeing the country threatened with the speedy exodus

### WORKMEN'S HOLIDAY.

A party of coolies making merry at a tea-house on one of the numerous festival days when all work is suspended and every one has a good time.







of all its gold, adopted an obvious remedy. It issued a new silver coin bearing the same denomination as the old but weighing three times as much. In short, it exercised a right which every independent nation would claim, the right of so modifying its currency, when suddenly brought into circulation with foreign coins, as to preserve a due ratio between gold and silver, and thus prevent the former's being drained out of the country at one third of its intrinsic value. Nevertheless this equitable view of the case did not commend itself to the men who looked to profit by the old conditions. They raised a vehement protest against what they called "a gross violation of treaty rights" and "a deliberate attempt on the part of the Japanese authorities to raise the price of all native produce 200 per cent against the foreign purchaser." There is documentary evidence that the foreign representatives appreciated the difficulties of Japan's position. None the less they held her to the unfair version of her agreement. She had to revert to coins of the old standard, and though she bowed to the necessity, the result of this complication was an abiding sense of injustice on her side, and an impression on that of the foreign resident that she had dishonestly sought to evade her engagements. Nothing, indeed, is more striking than the distrust that pervaded the whole attitude of the foreigner toward the Japanese in those early days. The worst construction was put upon their acts, whether official or private, and even when recording the adoption of some liberal course by the Tokyo government, the foreign representatives generally qualified their approval by a hope that no trickery or abuse was intended. It is plain that they had strong reasons for their want of confidence. The Tokugawa Regent, while faithfully willing to implement his treaty promises, was compelled by the exigencies of domestic policy to simulate an attitude of unwillingness.

The advocates of overthrowing feudalism and restoring the Emperor's administrative authority, endeavored constantly to embroil the regency with foreign powers by throwing obstacles in the path of smooth intercourse and by acts of violence against individual foreigners. The people, too subservient to take any initiative of their own, too shrewd to turn



HOTEL METROPOLE, TSUKIJI, TOKYO.

"Tsukiji" is the section of the city reserved by treaty for the places of residence of the Europeans.

their backs wholly on the profits of commerce, seemed at one time to be playing into the hands of anti-foreign officials, at another to be implicitly following the instincts of sound business. In the absence of any accessible gauge of public opinion, foreign observers had to rely upon rumor and conjecture, and every estimate of the situation was naturally colored by a suspicion that three centuries of anti-foreign prejudice could not have been replaced, at a moment's notice, by a genuine desire for free intercourse. Still, when the fullest allowance is made for all these factors of friction, it is not to be denied that the behavior of foreigners themselves was scarcely calculated to conciliate the Japanese.<sup>1</sup> Time, of course, corrected many of the evil influences operative in early days, but there is neither sense nor justice in claiming, as has been so often claimed by modern writers, that the foreigner residing in Japan has always been sinned against and never sinning in his dealings and doings. He has undoubtedly conferred on Japan an immense benefit by building up for her a trade which, without his experience, energy and capital, must have remained comparatively insignificant. But, on the other hand, his method has been masterful; his mood suspicious; his judgment harsh and unsympathetic; his scale of living so far above that of the Japanese merchant as to suggest an exaggerated estimate of the profit derived by him from their mutual commerce; and his persistent use of Chinese employees in positions of trust, to the exclusion of Japanese, has suggested a contemptuous and distrustful estimate of native capacities and integrity. There has thus been a steady effort on the Japanese side to eliminate the foreign middleman and transfer to native hands the share now taken by him in the country's over-sea trade. That point will presently be illustrated by figures; but we pass on now to trace the outlines of a question which, though in one sense independent of trade and tradal relations, seems to fall naturally into the context of this part of our subject.

It has always been considered expedient, and certainly it is wise, that the subjects and

<sup>1</sup>A more trustworthy witness on this subject cannot be cited than Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British representative in Japan. Writing to the British foreign secretary at the close of 1859, he said: "Looking, indeed, to the indiscreet conduct, to use the mildest term, of many if not all the foreign residents, the innumerable and almost daily recurring causes of dispute and irritation between the Japanese officials of all grades and the foreign traders, both as to the nature of the trade they enter into and the mode in which they conduct it, open in many instances to grave objection, I cannot wonder at the existence of much ill feeling. And when to those sources of irritation and animosity among the official classes are added the irregularities, the violence and the disorders, with the continual scenes of drunkenness, incidental to seaports where sailors from men-of-war and merchant ships are allowed to come on shore, sometimes in large numbers, I confess, so far from sharing in any sweeping conclusions to the prejudice of the Japanese, I think the rarity of such retaliative acts of violence on their part is a striking testimony in their favor. . . . Our own people and the foreigners generally take care that there shall be no lack of grounds of distrust and irritation. Utterly reckless of the future: intent only on profiting if possible by the present moment to the utmost; regardless of treaties or future consequences, they are wholly engaged just now in shipping off all the gold currency of Japan. . . . Any coöperation, therefore, with the diplomatic agents of their respective countries in their efforts to lay the foundations of permanent, prosperous and mutually beneficial commerce between Japan and Western nations is out of the question. On the contrary, it is the merchants who, no doubt, create the most serious difficulties. It may be all very natural and what was to have been anticipated, but it is not the less embarrassing. And in estimating the difficulties to be overcome in any attempt to improve the aspect of affairs, if the ill-disguised enmity of the governing classes and the indisposition of the executive government to give practical effect to the treaties be classed among the first and principal of these, the unscrupulous character and dealings of foreigners who frequent the ports for the purposes of trade are only second and, from the sinister character of the influence they exercise, scarcely inferior in importance."

citizens of Occidental Christian states, when visiting or inhabiting Oriental countries which are not Christian, should be exempted from the penalties and procedure prescribed by the latter's criminal law; should, in short, continue to enjoy, even within the territories of such countries, the privilege of being arraigned before tribunals of their own nationality and tried by judges of their own race. In pursuance of that principle the various powers having treaties with Oriental nations establish Consular Courts within the latter's borders, and the jurisdiction exercised by these courts is called "extra-territorial" to distinguish it from the jurisdiction exercised by native, or territorial, tribunals. The system was applied to Japan's case, as a matter of course, in 1858. One of its results was that the foreign residents had to be confined in settlements grouped about their Consular Courts, for it would have been plainly imprudent that they should be granted free access to provincial districts distant by perhaps scores or even hundreds of miles from the only tribunals competent to control them. The Japanese raised no objection at the outset to this system. They recognized that neither the character of their laws nor the methods of their law courts warranted any alternative. But, as a patriotic, self-respecting nation, they determined that no effort should be spared to qualify for the exercise of a right which is among the fundamental attributes of every sovereign state, the right of judicial autonomy. Under any circumstances the recasting of their laws and the reorganization of their law courts would have occupied a prominent place in the programme of general reform suggested by contact with the Western world, but the "extra-territorial" question certainly stirred them to special legislative efforts, for, apart from the irksomeness of consular jurisdiction as a badge of inferior civilization on the part of the country where it is exercised, numerous abuses and anomalies are incidental to the system itself.

Without entering into these particulars, it will suffice to say here that, after much labor and research, the Japanese elaborated excellent codes of criminal and civil law, excerpting the best features of European jurisprudence and adapting them to the conditions and usages of the country; and that they remodelled their law courts, taking steps also to educate



LUNCH STAND IN A PUBLIC PARK.

a judiciary whose members, though falling appreciably short of Anglo-Saxon standards, were not incompetent to discharge the duties devolving on them. Then Japan asked for the abolition of consular jurisdiction; asked that all within her borders, without distinction of nationality, should be subject to her laws and judicable by her law courts, as all persons, of whatever

nationality, found within the borders of every sovereign state in the West are subject to its laws and judicable by its law courts; and she supplemented her application by a promise that its favorable reception should be the signal for the complete opening of the country and the removal of all restrictions hitherto imposed on foreign trade, travel and residence in her



VILLAGE OF KIGA, NEAR MIYANOSHITA.

The emperor has a palace at Miyanoshita, and the little mountain village boasts of the best European hotel in Japan

realm. She said, in brief, to Western powers, "Recognize the efforts I have made to be worthy of your trust, and I, on my side, will entirely abandon the isolation which you yourselves have always condemned so vehemently as inconsistent with civilized principles." That was turning the tables very effectually.

From the first it had been the habit of Occidental peoples to upbraid Japan on account of the barriers opposed by her to foreign intercourse, and she was now able to claim that the barriers were no longer created by her intention or maintained by her desire, but that they existed because of a system which theoretically proclaimed her unfitness for free association with Western nations, and practically made it impossible for her to throw open her territories completely for the ingress of strangers. A portly volume might be filled with the details of the negotiations that followed Japan's proposal. Never before had an Oriental state sought such recognition, and there was the utmost reluctance on the part of Western powers to try the unprecedented experiment of intrusting the lives and property of their subjects and citizens to the keeping of a "pagan" people. Even the outlines of the story cannot be sketched here, though it abounds with diplomatic curiosities and though several of its incidents do as much credit to Japan's patience and tact as its finale does to the justice and liberality of Occidental governments. There is, however, one page of the history that calls for brief notice since it supplies a key to much which would otherwise be inexplicable.

The respect entertained by a nation for its own laws and the confidence it reposes in their administrators are in direct proportion to the efforts it has expended upon the development of the former and the education of the latter. Foreigners residing in Japan naturally clung to "extra-territorial" jurisdiction as a privilege of inestimable value. They saw, indeed, that such a system could not be permanently imposed on a country where the conditions justifying it had nominally disappeared, but they saw, also, that the legal and judicial reforms effected by Japan had been crowded into an extraordinarily brief period, and that, as tyros experimenting with alien systems, the Japanese might be betrayed into many errors. A struggle thus ensued between foreign distrust on the one side and Japanese aspirations on the other—a struggle often developing painful phases. For whereas the case for the foreign resident stood solid and rational so long as it rested on the basis of his proper attachment to the laws and the judiciary which the efforts of his nationals through long generations had rendered worthy of trust and reverence, and on the equally intelligible and reasonable ground that he wanted convincing proofs of Japan's competence to discharge her novel functions with discretion and impartiality before submitting to her jurisdiction, it ceased to be a solid and rational case when its champions undertook not merely to exaggerate the risks of trusting Japan implicitly, but also to prove her radical unworthiness of any trust whatever and to depict her under aspects so deterrent that to pass under her jurisdiction assumed the character of a catastrophe.

The struggle lasted fourteen years, but its gist is contained in this brief statement. The foreign resident, whose affection for his own systems was measured by the struggle their evolution had cost, and whose practical instincts forbade him to take anything on trust where security of person and possession was concerned, would have stood out a wholesomely conservative and justly cautious figure had not his attitude been disfigured by local journalists who in order to justify his conservatism allowed themselves to be betrayed into the constant *rôle* of blackening Japan's character and suggesting harshly prejudiced interpretations of her acts and motives. It is one thing to hesitate before entering a new house until its habitable qualifications have been ascertained. It is another thing to condemn it without trial as radically and necessarily deficient in such qualifications. The latter was, in effect, the line often taken by the noisiest opponents of Japan's claims, and of course no little resentment and indignation were aroused on the side of the Japanese, who, chafing against the obvious antipathies of their foreign critics and growing constantly more impatient of the humiliation to which their country was internationally condemned, were sometimes prompted to displays of resentment which became new weapons in the hands of their critics. Throughout this struggle the government and citizens of the United States always showed conspicuous sympathy with Japanese aspirations, and it should also be recorded that, with exceptions so rare as to establish the rule, foreign tourists and publicists discussed the problem liberally and fairly, perhaps because, unlike the foreign communities resident in

Japan, they had no direct interest in its solution. At last,<sup>1</sup> after long years of diplomatic negotiation and public discussion, European governments conceded the justice of Japan's demands, and it was agreed that from July, 1899, subject to the previous fulfilment of certain conditions,<sup>2</sup> Japanese tribunals should assume jurisdiction over every person

of whatever nationality within the confines of Japan and the whole country should be thrown open to foreigners, the "Settlements" being abolished and all limitations upon trade, travel and residence removed throughout the length and breadth of the realm. The sequel of the story is still in the lap of the future at the time of writing this record. It would be rash to forecast the result of an unprecedented experiment. There is one comment to be made, however. It is that the mood of many members of the foreign communities toward the new system greatly diminishes the chances of its smooth working. Where a captious and aggrieved disposition exists, opportunities to find fault and discover causes of complaint will not be wanting. The demeanor of the Japanese, also, on the eve of this great change is not altogether reassuring. Among the student and laboring classes a recrudescence of anti-foreign feeling has made itself apparent, not in the sense of the old "alien-expelling" tra-



GROUP OF CHILDREN.

Showing how the younger ones are strapped to the backs of the elder.

dition, but rather in the nature of an impulse of self-assertion which, though not unnatural

<sup>1</sup> It would be incorrect to suppose that the responsibility for the delay can be thrown entirely on the foreign side. More than once an agreement reached the verge of conclusion, when Japanese public opinion, partly incited by political intrigues, rebelled vehemently against the guarantees demanded of Japan, and the negotiations were interrupted in consequence, not to be again resumed until a considerable interval had elapsed. This point will easily be understood when we say that whereas, at the outset of the discussion, Japanese officialdom had the matter entirely in its own hands and might have settled it on any basis, however liberal to foreigners without provoking, for the moment at all events, seriously hostile criticism on the part of the nation, there gradually grew up among the people *pari passu* with journalistic development, with the study of international law and with the organization of political parties, a strong sense of what an independent state has a right to expect, and thus the longer the negotiations were protracted the keener became the popular scrutiny to which they were subjected and the greater the general reluctance to endorse any irksome concessions. Had foreign diplomacy recognized the growth of that sentiment and been content to take moderate advantage of the Japanese negotiators' mood, the issue might have been comparatively satisfactory to foreigners. But by asking too much and haggling too long, Western statesmen lost their opportunity of obtaining any substantial guarantees, and had ultimately to hand over their nationals to Japanese jurisdiction on pure trust.

<sup>2</sup> The main, indeed the only notable, condition was that the whole of the new Japanese codes of law must have been in operation for a period of at least one year before the abolition of consular jurisdiction.

under the circumstances, too often assumes a rude and truculent character not calculated to conciliate the foreign resident or to dispel his misgivings.

These diplomatic questions and the controversies that grew out of them did not interfere with the development of the country's foreign trade. In that field a fair prospect presented itself from the outset. Japan produces silk of specially fine quality, and it happened that, just before her supplies of that staple became available for export, the production of the "noble article" in France and Italy had been largely curtailed owing to a new disease of the silkworm. Thus, when the first bales of Japanese silk appeared in London and it was found to possess qualities superior not only to the silk of Bengal and China but even to anything hitherto known in Europe, a keen demand sprung up for it, and as early as 1863—the fourth year after the inauguration of the trade—no less than twenty-six thousand bales were sent out of the country. Japanese tea also found a market abroad, chiefly in the United States, and six million pounds were shipped in 1863. The corresponding figures for these two staples in 1897 were sixty-nine thousand bales and twenty-seven million pounds, respectively. That remarkable development is typical of the general history of Japan's foreign trade. Omitting the first decade, during which various abnormal factors were of course operative, we find that the volume of the trade grew from twenty-six million *yen* in 1868 to three hundred and eighty-two millions in 1897. It was not by any means a uniform growth, however. On the contrary, the period of thirty years (1868–97) divides itself conspicuously into two eras: the first of eighteen years (1868–85) during which the growth was from twenty-six to sixty-six millions, a ratio of 1 to  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , approximately; the second of twelve years (1885–97) during which the growth was from sixty-six to three hundred and eighty-two millions, a ratio of nearly 1 to 6. What was the chief cause of such unequal expansion? Why should a commerce which only doubled itself in eighteen years have sextupled itself in the next twelve? That is a question the answer to which possesses interest, not merely in this context, but also for independent reasons.



GATHERING COCOONS.  
A common scene in any village in the silk districts.

When the administrative power reverted to the Emperor in 1867, the central treasury was absolutely empty. It is not to be supposed that the funds hitherto employed for governmental purposes in the fiefs began at once to flow into the coffers of the state. On the contrary, the feudal nobles retained their principalities; the *Shogun* his domains; the temples their estates. The revenues accruing from these various sources continued to be collected and employed as before without any reference to the needs of the new Imperial administration. The agricultural classes were then paying taxes that aggregated two hundred and twenty million *yen* annually,—according to present rates and prices,—and merchants and manufacturers were subject to levies of greater or less magnitude as official necessity arose. In short, the taxable resources of the nation were pretty fully exploited for the support of the feudal system. The *Shogun*, who represented the apex of the system, abdicated, but did not hand over to the sovereign, his administrative successor, either the contents of his treasury or the control of the lands from which he derived his income. He contended, not without reason, that funds for the government of the nation as a whole should be levied from the people at large. Partly owing to this complication, and partly owing to the obstinacy of some of the *Shogun's* stanchest vassals, swords were drawn, and the impecunious ministry of the Emperor had to organize a campaign which, though followed by confiscations placing the government in command of certain limited sources of revenue, had also the effect of increasing its immediate embarrassments. No exit from the dilemma offered except an issue of paper money. This was not a novelty in Japan. Paper money had been known to the people since the middle of the seventeenth century, and in the era of which we are now writing no less than sixteen hundred and ninety-four varieties of notes were circulating in the two hundred and seventy-seven fiefs. There were gold notes, silver notes, *cash*-notes, rice-notes, umbrella-notes, ribbon-notes, lathe-article-notes, and so on through an interminable list, the circulation of each kind being limited to the confines of the issuing fief. Many of these notes had almost ceased to have any purchasing power, and nearly all were regarded by the people as evidences of official greed and unscrupulousness. The first duty of a centralized, progressive administration should have been to reform the currency; to substitute uniform and sound media of exchange for these multitudinous and unsecured tokens, which hampered trade, destroyed credit and opposed barriers to commercial intercourse between neighboring provinces and districts. The political leaders of the time appreciated that duty, but instead of proceeding to discharge it, saw themselves compelled by stress of circumstances to adopt the very device which, in the hands of the feudal chiefs, had involved such deplorable results. It was an irksome necessity, and the new government sought to relieve its conscience and preserve its moral prestige by pretending that the object of the issue was to encourage wealth-earning enterprise, and that the notes would be lent to the fiefs for the purpose of promoting commerce and industry. The people appraised these euphemisms at their true worth, and the new notes fell to a discount of fifty

per cent. Then ensued a brief but sharp struggle between rulers and ruled. The government resorted to arbitrary measures, sometimes of great severity, to force its notes into circulation at par with silver. But there was no continuity of policy. One day men were imprisoned for discounting paper tokens; the next they were released. In December, the authorities officially recognized a depreciation of twenty per cent; in the following April they withdrew the recognition and proclaimed the equality of specie and paper. Now they promised to redeem the notes in thirteen years; then they shortened the period to five, and again they postponed it indefinitely. Nothing is more astonishing than the fact that, despite this bewilderment and vacillation, the government's financial credit gradually acquired strength, so that within five years, though the issues of paper money aggregated nearly sixty million *yen*, it circulated freely throughout the whole Empire at par with silver, and even commanded at one time a small premium.

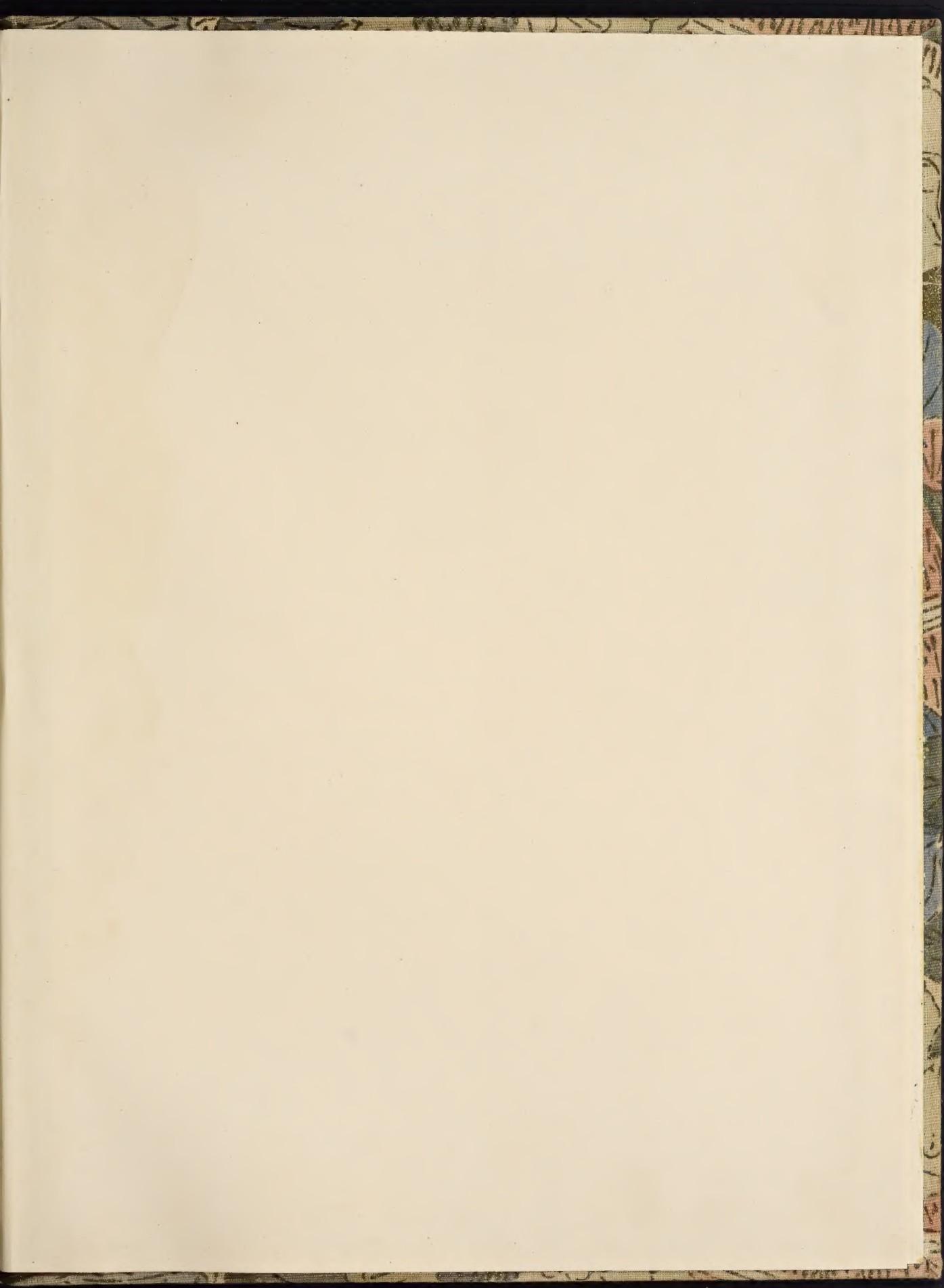
It is true that by this epoch the revenues of all the fiefs had become available for the service of the state, and that only one tenth of their total had been appropriated for the support of the territorial nobles, now deprived of all administrative functions and reduced to the rank of private gentlemen, without either titles to distinguish them from their former vassals or estates to give them local prestige. But the central government, having reduced taxation to about one fourth of its former total, found the public income too small for the expenditures. The paper money of the fiefs, amounting to twenty-five million *yen*, had been exchanged for treasury notes. The building of railways had been commenced. The foundations of an army and a navy had been laid. A postal system, a telegraph system, a prison system, a police system and an educational system had been organized. The construction of roads, the improvement of harbors, the lighting and buoying of the coast had been vigorously undertaken. A mercantile marine had been created. Public works had been inaugurated on a considerable scale. Many industrial enterprises had been started under official auspices as object lessons to the people, and large sums in aid of similar projects had been lent to



REELING SILK INTO LARGE SKEINS FOR THE MARKET.

private persons. The government, living far beyond its income, had unavoidable recourse to further issues of fiduciary paper, and in proportion as the volume of the latter exceeded the actual currency requirements of the time, its value depreciated until in 1881, fourteen years after the Restoration, notes to the face value of one hundred and thirty-five million *yen* had been put into circulation; the treasury possessed specie of only eight and one half millions, and eighteen paper *yen* could be purchased with ten silver coins of the same denomination. Up to that year fitful efforts had been made to strengthen the specie value of fiat paper by throwing quantities of gold and silver upon the market from time to time, and large sums—totalling twenty-three million *yen*—had been devoted to the promotion of industries whose products, it was hoped, would go to swell the list of exports and thus draw metallic money to the country.

But these superficial devices were now finally abandoned, and the government applied itself steadfastly to reducing the volume of the fiduciary currency, on the one hand, and accumulating a specie reserve, on the other. The steps of the programme were simple. By applying the pruning knife boldly to administrative expenditures; by transferring certain charges from the treasury to the local communes; by suspending all grants in aid of provincial public works and private enterprises, and by a moderate increase of the tax on alcohol, an annual surplus of revenue totalling seven and one half million *yen* was secured. This was applied to reducing the volume of the notes in circulation. At the same time it was resolved that all officially conducted industrial and agricultural works should be sold—since their purpose of instruction and example seemed now to have been sufficiently achieved—and the proceeds, together with various securities (aggregating twenty-six million *yen* in face value) held by the treasury, should be applied to the purchase of specie. The latter was a delicate and difficult operation. Had the government entered the market openly as a seller of its own fiduciary notes, its credit must have suffered. There were, also, ample reasons to doubt whether any available stores of precious metal remained in the country. In obedience to elementary economical laws, the cheap money had steadily driven out the dear, and although the government mint at Osaka, founded in 1871, had struck eighty million *yen* of gold and silver coins between that date and 1881, when the policy of which we are now speaking was inaugurated, the customs returns showed that the whole of this metallic currency had flowed out of the country. Under these circumstances Japanese financiers decided that only one course offered. The treasury must play the part of national banker. Products and manufactures destined for export must be purchased by the state with fiduciary notes, and the metallic proceeds of their sales abroad must be collected and stored in the treasury. The outcome of these various arrangements was that, by the middle of 1885, the volume of fiduciary notes had been reduced to one hundred and nineteen million *yen*, their depreciation had fallen to three per cent, and the metallic reserve of the treasury had increased to forty-five million *yen*. The resumption of specie payments was then announced, and became, in the autumn of that year, an accomplished fact.



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